



# IDEALS IN ART

BY WALTER CRANE



LONDON: G. BELL & SONS







Bernard Quint





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# IDEALS IN ART





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# IDEALS · IN · ART.

PAPERS · THEORETICAL · PRACTICAL · CRITICAL ·  
BY · WALTER · CRANE · Author of "Line & Form" &c



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## PREFACE

THE collected papers which form this book have been written at different times, and in the intervals of other work. Most of them were specially addressed to, and read before the Art Workers' Guild, as contributions to the discussion of the various subjects they deal with; so that they may be described as the papers of a worker in design addressed mainly to art workers. They are not, however, wholly or narrowly technical, and the point of view frequently bears upon the general relation of art to life.

Some of the papers were delivered as lectures to larger audiences, and others have appeared as articles, mostly in journals devoted to art.

Of the former, the one upon the Arts and Crafts movement was prepared for and read as one of a series of lectures given during a recent exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, and is now for the first time printed in its entirety.

The "Thoughts on House-Decoration" was read before the convention of the National Association of Master Painters and Decorators recently held at Leicester.

"The Influence of Modern Social and Economic Conditions on the Sense of Beauty" was the substance of an address at the opening of a debate on that question at a meeting of the Pioneer Club.

The paper on "The Progress of Taste in Dress" was written for "The Healthy and Artistic Dress Union," and appeared in their journal "Aglaia." The article on Mr. Chesterton's book appeared in "The Speaker"; that on "The Teaching of Art" in "The Art Journal."

The notes on "Gesso" work appeared in an early number of "The Studio," and I have to thank the editor, Mr. Charles Holme, for kindly allowing me to reprint it here, and also for the loan of the blocks used for the illustrations, both for this and others of the papers.

My best thanks are also due to Mr. Ernest Gimson for the loan of photographs of his cottage at Stoneywell; to the Earl of Pembroke for enabling me to obtain those of the double cube room at Wilton; to Mr. Charles Rowley, and Mr. Charles W. Gamble of the Municipal School of Technology, Manchester, for photographs of the Madox Brown frescoes; to Mr. Augustus Spenser and Mr. FitzRoy, the Principal and the Registrar of the Royal College of Art, for their help in obtaining for me the examples of the work of the students given; and to Mr. Arthur P. Monger for the care he took in photographing them; also to Mr. Kruger of the Royal College, for the use of his admirable drawing of the decorations of

Westminster Bridge, which appeared in "The Magazine of Art," and is now reproduced by permission of Mr. M. H. Spielmann and Messrs. Cassell.

I should like to add a note or two on some of the illustrations, on other points not commented upon in the papers.

The sketch plan and elevation of a collective dwelling (at page 116), for which I am indebted to my architect-son, is offered as a suggestion of what could be done in this way on very simple lines. Each tenant in such a collective dwelling would have his private house or cottage, with the advantage of the use of the common dining-hall, and the service of a collective kitchen; also a general reading-room, and to these rooms a vaulted way with an open arcade on the side next the quadrangle would enable each tenant to reach this part of the building under cover from his own dwelling, which comprises a private garden, as well as the use of the common quadrangle.

From the architectural point of view grouped dwellings, upon some such principle as here suggested, would undoubtedly lend themselves to artistic and pleasant treatment, and would mitigate the depressing effect of the monotonous rows of squat dwellings intended for our workers' homes, and the mean sameness of the streets, which are spreading around our great towns in every direction, only, it is to be feared, to form slums in the future.

In regard to Manchester, spoken of on page 119, another practical step has been taken in



the much-needed direction of school-decoration. Through the public spirit of Mr. Grant, one of her citizens, who has found money enough to start the work, students of the Municipal School of Art are enabled to carry out on a large scale mural paintings upon the upper walls of the class-rooms in one of the principal primary schools. The subjects have been enlarged from some of my coloured book designs such as "Flora's Feast." Such work might not only be made to bear most helpfully on the general work of education, but in itself be an important side of school influence, since by means of large simple typical mural designs great historical events and personages, as well as natural form, might be made familiar to the eyes of children at the same time that their sense of beauty and imaginative faculties were appealed to.

Local history might in this way be preserved also. In this connection one was glad to see the other day at Hoxne (the ancient Eaglesdune) in Suffolk the school-house connected with the history of the place by having a figure of St. Edmund carved as a finial of the chief gable, with a relief in stone let into the wall beneath, illustrating the incident of the saintly king being taken by the Danes at the bridge, while an inscription mentions that the building marks the spot, and the date of his death in 870.

WALTER CRANE.

YEW TREE FARM,  
*September, 1905.*

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# IDEALS IN ART

## OF THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT: ITS GENERAL TENDENCY AND POSSIBLE OUTCOME

IT seems a strange thing that the last quarter of the nineteenth—or what I was going to call our machine-made—century should be characterized by a revival of the handicrafts; yet of the reality of that revival there can now be no manner of doubt, from whatever point we date its beginnings, or to whomsoever we may trace its initiation.

Of the Arts  
and Crafts  
movement:  
Its general  
tendency and  
possible out-  
come

Indeed, it seems to me that the more we consider the characteristics of different epochs in the history of art, or of the world, the less we are able to isolate them, or to deal with them as phenomena by themselves, so related they seem to what has gone before them, and to what succeeds them, just as are the personalities associated with them; and I do not think this movement of ours will prove any exception to this rule.

Standing as we do on the threshold of a new century—which so often means a new epoch in



history, if not in art—it may, perhaps, be allowable to look back a bit, as well as forward, in attempting a general survey of the movement. Like a traveller who has reached a certain stage of his journey, we look back over the region traversed, losing sight, in such a wide prospect, and in the mists of such a far distance, of many turns in the road, and places by the way, which at one time seemed important, and only noting here and there certain significant landmarks which declare the way by which we have come.

To take a very rapid glance at the phases of decorative art of the past century, we see much of the old life and traditions in art carried on from the eighteenth century into the early years of the nineteenth, when the handicrafts were still the chief means in the production of things of use or beauty. The luxurious excess of the later renaissance forms in decoration, learned from France and Italy (though adopted in this country with a certain reserve), corrected by a mixture of Dutch homeliness, and later by French empire translations of Greek and Roman fashions in ornament, often attained a certain elegance and charm in the gilded stucco mirror frames and painted furniture of our Regency period, which replaced the more refined joinery, veneer, and inlaid work of Chippendale and his kinds.

Classical taste dominated our architecture, striving hard to become domesticated, but looking chilly and colourless in our English gray climate, as if conscious of inadequate clothing.

This Greco-Roman empire elegance gradually

wore off, and turned to frigid plainness in domestic architecture, and to corpulency in furniture, as the middle of the century was approached, when the old classical tradition in furniture, handed on from Chippendale, Sheraton, and Hepplewhite, seemed to be suddenly broken into by wild fancies and fantastic attempts at naturalism in carving, combined with a reckless curvature of arms and legs supporting (or supported by) springs and padding. Drawing-rooms revelled in ormolu and French clocks, vast looking-glasses, and the heavy artillery of polished mahogany pianos, while Berlin-wool-work and anti-macassars in crochet took possession of any ground not occupied by artificial flowers, and other wonders, under glass shades.

The '51 Exhibition was the apotheosis of mid-nineteenth century taste, or absence of taste, perhaps. The display of industrial art and furniture then, to judge from illustrated catalogues and journals of the period, seemed to indicate that ideas of design and craftsmanship were in a strange state. The new naturalism was beginning to assert itself, but generally in the wrong place, and in all sorts of unsuitable materials. Those were the days when people marvelled at the skill of a sculptor who represented a veiled figure in marble so that you could almost see through the veil!—but that was “Fine Art.” Industrial art was in a very different category, yet it was influenced by fine art, and, generally, greatly to its disadvantage. We had vignetted landscapes upon china and coal-boxes, for instance, and Landseer pictures on

hearth-rugs—and our people loved to have it so.

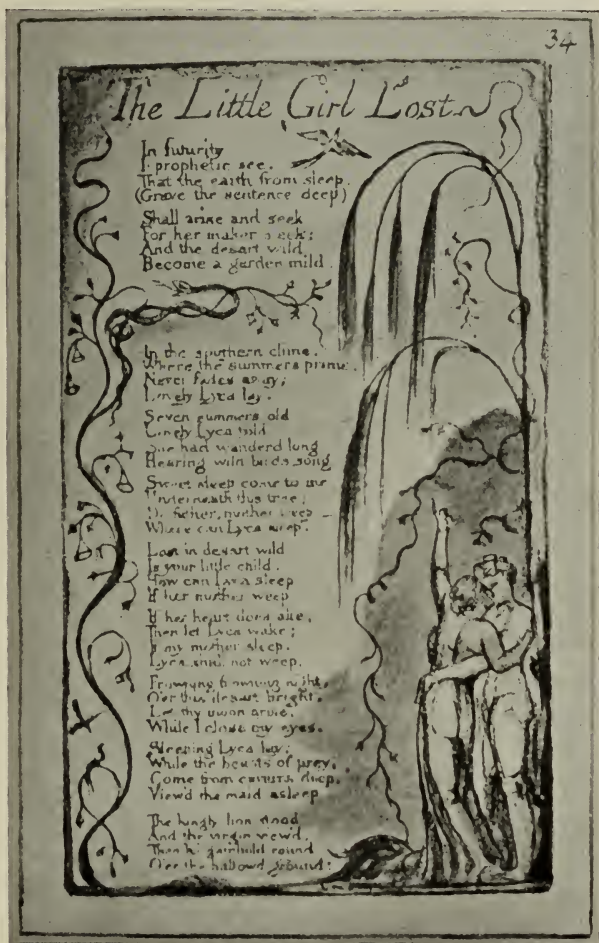
These things were done, and more also, in the ordinary course of trade, which flourished exceedingly, and no one bothered about design. If furniture and fittings were wanted, the upholsterer and ironmonger did the rest.

Yet was it not in the “fifties” that Alfred Stevens made designs for iron grates? so that there must have been *one* artist, at any rate, not above giving thought to common things. Designers like Alfred Stevens, and his followers Godfrey Sykes and Moody, certainly represented in their day a movement inspired chiefly by a study of the earlier renaissance, and an honest desire to adapt its forms to modern decoration. Their work, though suffering—like all original work—deterioration at the hands of imitators, showed a search for style and boldness of contour and line, touched with a certain refined naturalism which gives the work of Alfred Stevens and his school a very distinct place. It was mainly a sculptor’s and modeller’s movement, and represented a renaissance revival in modern English decorative art; and through the work of Godfrey Sykes and Moody, in association with the government schools of art, it had a considerable effect upon the art of the country.

But I think many and mixed elements contributed to the change of feeling and fashion which came about rather later, in which perhaps may be traced the influence of modes of thought expressing themselves also in literature and

poetry, as well as the study of different models in design.

Of the Arts and Crafts movement



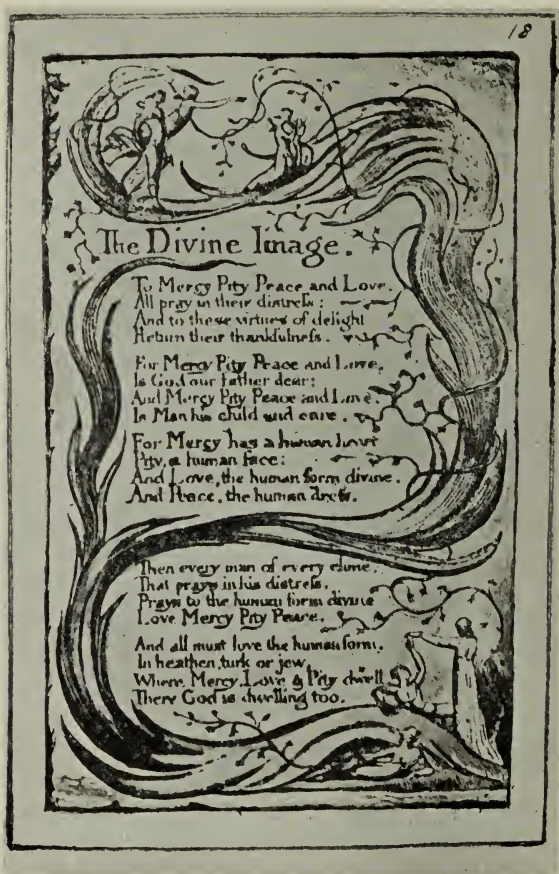
Page from  
Blake's  
"Songs of  
Experience"

One cannot forget that the early years of the nineteenth century were illuminated by the

Of the Arts  
and Crafts  
movement

Page from  
Blake's  
"Songs of  
Innocence"

name and work of William Blake, whose fresh  
inspiration and clearness of inner vision were



expressed in so individual a form with such  
fervour of poetic feeling and social aspiration,  
both in verse and design, in the books engraved





Wood En-  
gravings by  
Edward  
Calvert

The Return  
Home



Ideal Pas-  
toral Life



The Cham-  
ber Idyll

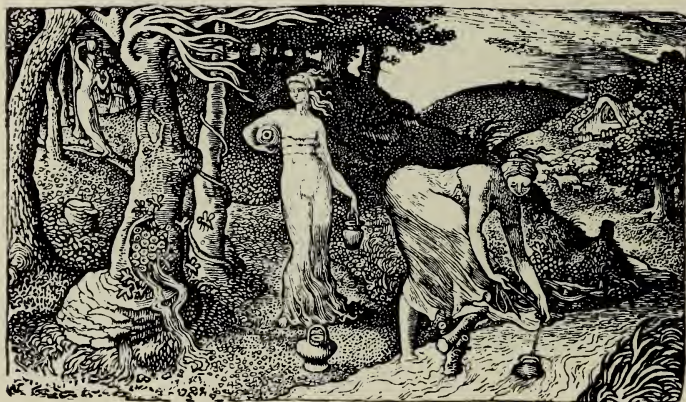
Wood En-  
gravings by  
Edward  
Calvert



The Flood



The Lady  
and the  
Rooks



The Brook



and printed by himself which remain the remarkable monument of his neglected genius.

The group of artists associated with him, too, such as Edward Calvert and Samuel Palmer,

Of the Arts  
and Crafts  
movement



Illustrations  
to Tennyson

"The Ballad  
of Oriana,"  
By Holman  
Hunt

marked an epoch in English poetic illustration, associated with wood engraving and printing, of very distinct character and beauty, the influence of which may be seen at the present day in some of the woodcuts of Mr. Sturge Moore.

The more conscious classical designs of Flax-

Of the Arts  
and Crafts  
movement

man and Stothard were colder, but graceful, and mark a period from which we seem more widely separated than from others more remote, yet seemingly nearer in sentiment.

Quite a different kind of sentiment was fostered by the writings of Scott upon which so

Illustrations  
to Tennyson



"The Palace  
of Art." By  
D. G. Ros-  
setti

many generations have been fed, but they had their effect in keeping alive the sense of romance and interest in the life of past days, still further enlightened by the researches of antiquarians, and the increased study of the Middle Ages, and above all of Gothic architecture. All these must be considered as so many tributary streams to swell the main current of thought and feeling

which carried us on to the artistic revival of our own times.

The poetry of Tennyson, with its sense of

Of the Arts  
and Crafts  
movement

Illustrations  
to Tennyson



The Bride  
(from "The  
Talking  
Oak"). By  
Sir J. E.  
Millais

colour, sympathy with art and nature, and the romance of the historic past, its thoroughly English feeling, and its revival of the Arthurian Legend, and its association (in the Moxon edition of 1857) with the designs of some of the



leading pre-Raphaelite painters must be counted if not as a very strong influence upon, at least as an evidence and an accompaniment of that movement.

The names of Ford Madox Brown, of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, of William Holman Hunt, at once suggest artists of extraordinary individuality, remarkable decorative instinct, and carefulness for, and scholarly knowledge of, beautiful and significant accessories of life, of which all have not only given evidence in their own craft of painting, but also as practical designers.

The name of another remarkable artist must be mentioned, that of Frederick Sandys, contemporary with the pre-Raphaelites, imbued with their spirit, and following their methods of work. A wonderful draughtsman and powerful designer, who in all his work shows himself fully alive to beauty of decorative design in the completeness, care, and taste with which the accessories of his pictures and designs are rendered. His powers of design and draughtsmanship are perhaps best shown in the illustrations engraved on wood which appeared in "Once a Week," "The Cornhill Magazine," and elsewhere, which were shown with the collections of the artist's work at the International Society's last exhibition at the New Gallery, and at the Winter Exhibition at Burlington House in the present year (1905).

In some quarters it appears to be supposed that the pre-Raphaelite movement consisted entirely of Rossetti, and that to explain its development you have only to add water—or cari-

Manoli. By  
Frederick  
Sandys



From "The  
Cornhill  
Magazine"

cature. It is extraordinary to think in what uncritical positions professional critics occasionally land themselves.

I cannot understand how any candid and fairly well-informed person can fail to perceive that the pre-Raphaelite movement was really a very complex movement, containing many different elements and the germs of different kinds of development in art.

If it was primitive and archaic on one side, it was modern and realistic on another, and again, on another, romantic, poetic, and mystic; or again, wholly devoted to ideals of decorative beauty.

The very names of the original members of the brotherhood, to say nothing of later adherents, suggest very marked differences of temperament and character, and these differences were reflected in their art.

The stimulating writings of Ruskin must also be counted a factor in the movement, in his recognition of the fundamental importance of beautiful and sincere architecture and its relation to the sister arts: in his enthusiasm for truer ideals both in art and life: in the ardent love of and study of nature so constantly, so eloquently expressed throughout his works.

Despite all controversial points, despite all contradictions—mistakes even—I think that every one who has at any time of his life come under the influence of Ruskin's writings must acknowledge the nobility of purpose and sincerity of spirit which animates them throughout.

It is the fashion now in some quarters to undervalue his influence, but at all events it was at its best a wholesome and stimulating influence, provocative of thought, and no man must be held accountable for the mistakes or misapplications of his followers—the inevitable Nemesis of genius.

It was an influence which certainly had practical results in many ways, and not least must be counted its influence upon the life, opinions and work of the man to whose workshop is commonly traced the practical revival of sincere design and handicraft in modern England—I need hardly say I mean William Morris.

It is notable that at the outset the initiation of that practical revival was due to a group of artists, including the names already mentioned, and although in later days the practical direction of the work fell into the hands of William Morris, the fact that the enterprise had the sympathy and support of the leading artists of the pre-Raphaelite School must not be forgotten.

Indeed, it is said that the initiative or first practical proposal in the matter came from D. G. Rossetti, and it must be remembered that originally the main object of the firm was to supply their own circle with furniture and house decorations to suit their own tastes, though the operations were afterwards extended to the public with extraordinary success. The work, too, of the group was strengthened on the architectural side by such excellent designers as Mr. Philip Webb, who, in addition to architectural and constructive work of all kinds is



remarkable for the force and feeling of his designs of animals used in decorative schemes, both in the flat and in relief.

The hare and hound in the frieze of the dining-room at South Kensington Museum are early works of his, as well as the woodwork of the room.

The study of mediaeval art had, however, been going on for many years before, and books of the taste and completeness of those of Henry Shaw, for instance, had been published, dealing with many different provinces of decorative art, from alphabets to architecture. The well engraved and printed illustrations of these works afforded glimpses even to the uninitiated of the wonderful richness, invention and variety of the art of the Middle Ages—so long neglected and misunderstood—while the treasures of the British Museum in the priceless illuminated manuscripts of those ages were open to those who would really know what mediaeval book-craft was like.

Then, too, the formation of the unrivalled collections at South Kensington, and the opportunities there given for the study of very choice and beautiful examples of decorative art of all kinds, especially of mediaeval Italy and of the earlier renaissance, played a very important part both in the education of artists and the public, and helped with other causes to prepare the way for new or revived ideas in design and craftsmanship.

The movement went quietly on at first, confined almost exclusively to a limited circle of

artists or artistically-minded people. It grew under the shadow of the atrocious Franco-British fashions of the sixties, now (or recently) so much admired, crinolines and all, in some quarters, because I suppose they are so old-fashioned.

Of the Arts  
and Crafts  
movement

Independent signs of dissatisfaction with current modes, however, were discernible here and there. It was, I think, about this time that Mr. Charles L. Eastlake (late Keeper of the National Gallery) who was trained as an architect, published a book called "Hints on Household Taste," in which he says somewhere: "Lost in the contemplation of palaces we have forgotten to look about us for a chair." This seemed to indicate a reaction against the exclusive attention then given to what were called "the Fine Arts."

Associations were formed for the discussion of artistic questions of all kinds, and I mind me of a certain society of art students which used to meet in the well-known room at No. 9, Conduit Street, the existence of which indicated that there were thought and movement in the air among the younger generation and new ideas were on the wing, many of them carrying the germs of important future developments. Even outside Queen Square there were certain designers of furniture and surface decorations not wholly absorbed by trade ideals, who maintained a precarious existence as decorative artists.

There were architects, too, of such distinction and character as Pugin, William Burges, and Butterfield, who were fully alive to the value of



mediaeval art, and were bold experimenters as well as scholars and enthusiasts in their revival of the use of mural decoration in colour.

Mr. Norman Shaw's work, which has so much influenced the newer architectural aspects of London, comes later, and is more distinctly and intimately related to our movement, which it may here be said has owed much of its strength to its large architectural element.

There were, of course, builders and decorators in those days, but the genus "decorative artist" was a new species as distinct from the painter and paper-hanger.

While these, and the historic, the landscape, the animal, and *genre* painter had their exhibitions, were recognized, and some of them duly honoured at times, decorative artists and designers may be said to have had nowhere to lay their heads—in the artistic sense—so they laid their heads together!

The immediate outcome of this sympathetic counsel took the form of fireside discussions by members of a society of decorative artists founded by Mr. Lewis F. Day, strictly limited in number, called "the Fifteen." This small society was in course of time superseded, or rather absorbed, by a larger body known as the Art Workers' Guild, which contained architects, painters, designers, sculptors, and craftsmen of all kinds, and grew and increased mightily; it has since thrown out a younger branch in the Junior Art Workers' Guild.

Guilds, or groups of associated workers were also formed for the practice and supply of cer-

tain handicrafts, and societies like that of the Home Arts and Industries Association organized village classes in wood-carving, pottery, metal-work, basket-making, turning, spinning, and weaving linen, embroidery, and other crafts.

These efforts, mostly due to a band of enthusiastic amateurs, must all be counted, if not always satisfactory in their results, yet as educational in their effects, and as creating a wider public interested in the handicraft movement, and therefore as adding impetus to that movement, which in 1888—the year of our own society's foundation—even rose to the height of—or extended to the length of—a “National Association for the Advancement of Art in Relation to Industry” (such was its title) which actually held congresses in successive years in Liverpool, Edinburgh, and Birmingham—as if they were scientists or sectarians. Members of our society were more or less connected with these developments.

All this time we had, as we still have, a Royal Academy of Arts. But somewhere in the early eighties arose certain bold, bad men who—not satisfied with an annual picture-show of some two thousand works or so, always fresh—desired to see a national exhibition of art which should comprise not only paintings, sculpture, and architectural water-colours, but some representation of the arts and handicrafts of design.

Another plank in this artistic platform was the annual election of a selection and hanging committee out of and by the whole body of artists in the kingdom. This movement at-

tracted a considerable number of adherents, largely among the rising school of painting, until it was discovered that several of the leaders desired to belong to the garrison of the fortress they proposed to attack.

The Arts and Crafts section of this movement, mostly members of the Guild aforesaid, seeing their vision look hopeless in that direction, then withdrew, and formed themselves into the present Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, with power to add to their number. And I think they gathered to themselves all the artists and craftsmen of standing who were sympathetic and willing to subscribe to their aims.

We may note here that since the directors of the Grosvenor Gallery in its Winter Exhibition of 1881 arranged a collection of designs for decoration, including cartoons for mosaic, tapestry, and glass, no attempt to show contemporary work of the kind had been made.

We were, however, but few at first, and but few of us widely known, and with limited influence. William Morris and Burne-Jones did not join us until we had fairly organized ourselves and defined our programme, though their works from the first have enriched our exhibitions.

The initial steps were laborious and difficult and the process of organization slow, each step being carefully debated. Suitable premises seemed at one time impossible to procure, the demands of an ordinary picture-gallery being by no means suited to the mixed displays of an arts and crafts exhibition, so little so, indeed,

that it was proposed to hire a large old-fashioned London mansion in order to group our exhibits in better relation.

Time, however, seemed to help us somewhat, as, during the period of our formation the New Gallery was opened—emerging in marble and gilding from its whilom dusty chrysalis as an abandoned meat market—and here, in the autumn of 1888, as may be remembered, supported by a courageous list of guarantors we opened our first exhibition.

I think we were fully conscious that an exhibition is at the best necessarily a very imperfect thing, and should probably even agree that it was a necessary evil. An exhibition of such various elements as an arts and crafts show brings together has its own particular difficulties.

One cannot place fragmentary pieces of decorative art in their proper relation, and relation is of the essence of good decorative art.

We are driven to a sort of compromise, finding practical difficulties in the way of logical systems—such as the grouping according to *kind*, or the grouping according to *authorship*—and have resorted to a mixed method with a view to the best decorative ensemble with the materials at hand—with the result, I fear, of hurting the feelings of nearly everybody concerned—but that is the common fate of exhibition committees.

Having had the honour of being president during the first three years of the society's existence I had occasion to state its objects and

principles as far as I understood them, and as these are set forth in our Book of Essays it does not seem necessary to repeat what is there written, but a short re-statement of the chief points may not be out of place here.

We desired first of all to give opportunity to the designer and craftsman to exhibit their work to the public for its artistic interest and thus to assert the claims of decorative art and handicraft to attention equally with the painter of easel pictures, hitherto almost exclusively associated with the term art in the public mind.

Ignoring the artificial distinction between Fine and Decorative art, we felt that the real distinction was what we conceived to be between good and bad art, or false and true taste and methods in handicraft, considering it of little value to endeavour to classify art according to its commercial value or social importance, while everything depended upon the spirit as well as the skill and fidelity with which the conception was expressed, in whatever material, seeing that a worker earned the title of artist by the sympathy with and treatment of his material, by due recognition of its capacity, and its natural limitations, as well as of the relation of the work to use and life.

We sought to trace back ornament to its organic source in constructive necessity.

We asserted the principle that the Designer and Craftsman should be hand in hand, and work *head* with hand in both cases, so that mere redundancy of ingenious surface ornament on the one hand, or mechanical ingenuity in executive

skill on the other, should not be considered as ends in themselves, but only as means to ends, neither the one nor the other being tolerable without controlling taste.

But how assign artistic credit to nameless workers? One can hardly expect artistic judgement and distinction without artistic responsibility, and, according to the usual methods of industrial exhibitions, individual designers and craftsmen were concealed under the general designation of a firm.

We therefore asked for names of responsible executants—those who had contributed in any way to the artistic character of the work.

This seemed a simple and obvious request, but there has probably been more difficulty over this one point than over any other of our programme.

But here we encounter the sharp corner of an economic question, as is so often the case in pursuing a question of principle in art—a question touching the position and artistic freedom of the workman. A workman, one perhaps of many who contribute to the production of a piece of modern craftsmanship, is in the hands of the firm that exhibits the work. It is to the commercial interest of the firm to be known as the producer of the work, and it must be therefore out of good nature or sense of fairness, or desire to conform to our conditions, when the name of the actual workman is given, who so long as he is in the employ of a firm is supposed to work exclusively in that firm's interest. Complaints have been made that the workman whose



name is given on an exhibited work may be tempted away to work for a rival firm,—an interesting illustration of the working of our system of commercial competition.

Yet, if a workman is worthy of his hire, the good craftsman is surely worthy of due personal credit for his skill, and if superior skill has a tendency to increase in market value, we need not be surprised, either as employers or private artists, seeing that in either case *we* should consider it fair to avail *ourselves* of such increase.

I think the question must be honestly faced. As it is, owing to accidents, intentional omissions, or inadvertencies, our cataloguing in this respect has not been so complete as one could wish, and we are necessarily dependent in respect to these particulars upon our exhibitors.

Our exhibition for the first three years was *annual*. With the election of William Morris as President a change of policy came in, and it was considered advisable to limit ourselves to triennial exhibitions. This was partly because the organization of a yearly exhibition put a considerable strain and responsibility upon a voluntary executive, and consumed a considerable amount of the thought and time of working artists; partly also from the consideration that more interesting shows would result if held after a three years' interval, giving time for the production of important work. It must be said, however, that artistic production of constructive and decorative work was then in fewer hands, and it was impossible to foresee the increase of activity in the arts and crafts, or the steady

support of an interested, if comparatively limited, public which we have enjoyed.

Looking back at the general character of our exhibitions, it is interesting to note certain lines of evolution in the development of design and the persistence of certain types of design. Now even in the work of a single artist, the character of his design is seen to undergo many changes in the course of his career, as he comes under various different influences. Some are more, some are less variable, but a man's youthful work differs considerably from his mature work, as his later work will again differ from his mature work. While there is life there must be movement, growth, and change, let us tie ourselves down as narrowly as we will. But even apart from this, the process of evolution may be seen and felt in the conception and construction of a design before it finally leaves our hands. We get the germ of an idea, and in adapting it to its material and purpose it is necessarily modified. Even in the character and quality of its line and mass it is added to or taken away from in obedience to our sense of what is fit and harmonious.

If, then, this process takes place with the individual, how much more with many individuals developing either on one line or many? How much more shall we discern this trend of evolution in the sum and mass of work after the passage of years?

To the superficial observer the work of a group of men more or less in sympathy in general aim is apt to be labelled all alike,

whereas among that very group we may discern tendencies and sympathies in reality most diverse.

Now it seems as regards general tendencies in design in our movement that, after a period of a rich and luxuriant development of ornament, a certain reaction has taken place in favour of simplicity and reserve. It is probably a perfectly natural desire for repose after a period of excitement. And even where pattern is used the character of the form is much more restricted and formal as a rule. There is a tendency to build upon rectangular or vertical lines and to allow larger intermediary spaces.

The same desire for severity and simplicity in a more marked degree is to be observed in furniture design and construction. In fact, throughout all the recent work in the larger kinds of decoration and craftsmanship, this aim at simplicity and severity of line and general treatment is pronounced. This probably reflects the same feeling observable in recent domestic architecture, wherein a search for proportion and style, with simplicity of line and mass seem to influence the designer, and an appropriate use of materials rather than ornamental detail. But in one direction richness and artistic fancy seems to have found a new field, and it is a province which in our earlier exhibitions had hardly any representation at all, I mean jewellery and gold and silversmith's work and the art of enamelling, which show an extraordinary development, and may be claimed as a distinct and direct result of the new artistic

impulse in the handicrafts. In these arts there is obviously very great scope for individuality of treatment, for invention, for fancy, and taste.

It was in the year 1887 that, at the invitation of Mr. Armstrong (the then Director for Art at the Science and Art Department) a French artist-craftsman (the late M. Louis Dalpeyrat of Limoges<sup>1</sup>) gave a series of demonstrations in enamelling at the South Kensington schools. Among the band of interested students was Mr. Alexander Fisher, who took up the work seriously; his accomplishment is so well known and so many workers in enamelling owe their first instruction to him that he has been called the father of the recent English revival in this beautiful craft.

I ventured to say on some occasion in the early days of our movement that "We must turn our artists into craftsmen, and our craftsmen into artists."

Well, certainly the first part of the sentence has been fulfilled in a remarkable way, since the movement is chiefly notable for the number

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Armstrong for some interesting particulars as to this. It appears that M. Louis Dalpeyrat was employed to make copies of some of the pieces of enamel in the South Kensington Museum, which he did very skilfully, and these copies were used for circulation among provincial museums and schools of art. Mr. Armstrong obtained sanction for M. Dalpeyrat to give a series of demonstrations in enamelling to a class of twelve students from the National Art Training School (now the Royal College of Art), and these were given in the metallurgical laboratory in the College of Science, where the plaques were fired, Prof. Roberts Austen having given permission. There was no grant at that time for technical instruction.

of artists who have become craftsmen in a variety of different materials.

In the second, transformation has not taken place to the same extent, which may, perhaps, be more or less accounted for by the consideration of those economic questions before spoken of, in so far as they apply to the workman.

As a rule the workman has been specialized for a particular branch of work, or a particular subdivision of a branch of workmanship; he seldom can acquire an all-round knowledge of a craft, and is seldom able to take a complete or artistic view of his work, as a whole, as he never produces a complete whole under the conditions of the modern workshop or factory.

Then, too, English workmen have been trained to look upon mechanical perfection and mechanical finish as the ideal, and it is impossible to set up a different ideal in a short time.

It must be remembered, also, that, as a class, the modern workman is engaged in a great economic struggle—an industrial war, quite as real, and often as terrible in its results as a military one—to raise his standard of life, or even to maintain it amid the fluctuations of trade, and, as a rule, he is not in a position to cultivate his taste in art.

Let us hope that the new schools of design under the Technical Education Board will have their effect, as they undoubtedly offer new and better practical opportunities to young craftsmen than have been available before

Such schools as the Central School of Arts and

Crafts, under the London County Council, may be regarded as a direct outcome of the movement, and it is a remarkable fact that its teachers are composed principally of members of our society and committee, to whom the organization of the classes was due.

Besides, if the artist has learned of the craftsman, there must be a good deal of education going on quietly in the studios and workshops of those aforesaid artist-craftsmen, wherein the craftsman learns in his turn of the artist, and here again must spring good results.

Sound traditions of design and workmanship should be of enormous help in starting students on safe paths, and preventing that painful process of *un*learning from which so many earnest students and artists have suffered in our days. Such traditions, however, should never be allowed to crystallize or hinder new thought and freedom of invention within the limits of the material in which the designer works, for living art exhibits a constant growth and evolution; and though in some cases the process of evolution in an artistic life may appear to take rather the form of degeneration, the important thing is to preserve life with its principle of growth, without losing balance, and above all, sense of fitness and beauty.

If beauty and utility are our guides in all design and handicraft, we can hardly go wrong. If our design is organic both in itself and in its incorporation with constructive necessity—if it, springing out of that necessity, expresses the joy of the artist, and is truly the crown of the



work, making the dumb material vocal with expressive line and form, or colour, it must at least be a thing having life, character, sincerity, and these are important elements in the expression of new beauty.

Along with the formation of discussion clubs and societies of designers and craftsmen, the tendency to form Guilds of Handicraft, whether they are a new form of commercial enterprise, or consist, as they frequently do, in the first place, of a group of artists and craftsmen in genuine sympathy working together with assistants, must be noted as another sign of the influence of the movement; as also the influence of certain types of design upon ordinary trade production.

It is even asserted that—I quote from a trade journal on a recent Arts and Crafts exhibition—“the arts and crafts movement has been the best influence upon machine industry during the past ten years”—that “while we have sought to develop handicrafts beside it on sound and independent lines, we have succeeded in imparting something of the spirit of craftsmanship to the best kind of machine-work bridging over the former gulf between machinery and tools, and quickening machine-industry with a new sense of the artistic possibilities that lie within its own proper sphere.”

Let us hope so, indeed.

Certainly we cannot hope that the world, just yet, will beat its swords into ploughshares, or its spears into pruning-hooks, still less that it will return to local industry and handicraft for

all the wants of life, or look solely to the independent artist and craftsman to make its house beautiful. The organized factory and the great machine industries will continue to work for the million, as well as for the millionaire, under the present system of production; but, at any rate, they can be influenced by ideas of design, and it must be said that some manufacturers have shown themselves fully alive to the value of the co-operation of artists in this direction. Those who desire and can command the personal work of artists in design and handicraft are now able to enlist it, and this demand is likely to increase, and therefore industrial groups or guilds of this kind may increase.

If such groups of workers, or workers in the different handicrafts could by combination in some way still further counteract or control purely commercial production, by raising certain standards of workmanship and taste, and in the special branches of handicraft look after the artistic interests of their members generally, their power and influence might be much extended, especially if such guilds could be in some sort of friendly relation, so that they could on occasion act together, combining their forces and resources, for instance, for special exhibitions, or representations, such as masques and pageants, of the kind recently presented by the Art Workers' Guild at the Guildhall of the City of London.

Such shows, uniting as they do all kinds of design and craftsmanship in the embodiment of a leading idea, are a form of artistic expression

which may be regarded as the latest outcome of the movement, and may have a future before it.

I think that by such means, at all events, artistic life would be greatly stimulated, and artistic aims and ideals better understood—especially in their relation to social life.

And, surely, art has a great social function, even though it may have no conscious aim but its own perfecting.

Even in its most individual form it is a product of the community—of its age, and it is always impossible to say how many remote and mixed elements are combined to form that complex organism—an artistic temperament.

Every age looks eagerly in the glass which art and craftsmanship hold up, even if it is only to find itself reflected there. But it not only seeks reflection, it seeks expression—the expression of its thought and fancy, as well as its sense of beauty, and the successful artist is he who satisfies this search.

It seems, too, that every age, probably even each generation, has a different ideal of beauty, or that, perceiving a different side of beauty, each successively ever seeks some new form for its expression. This is the movement of growth and life, the sap of the new idea rising in the spring-time of youth through the parent stem, bursting into new branches and putting forth leaves; the green herb springing from the dead leaves—the new ever striving with the old.

It is always possible for a society to narrow down, or to widen. It may consider its true

work lies in the exposition chiefly of the work of one school, and would be perfectly justified in so thinking, so long as that school maintained its vitality and power of growth.

On the other hand, it might determine to have no prejudices on the subject of school or style, but welcome all good work after its kind.

Such points are largely controlled by considerations of available space and determination of scope, and are usually settled by the effective strength of the view which has the majority. There might even be something to be said, given unlimited space, and security against financial loss, for placing every work sent in to such exhibitions, but keeping the *selected* work in a distinct section.

"*Here*," we might say, "is the material we had to deal with, and *here* is our selection, and so make the exhibition an open court of appeal. These are questions for the future. We have, as a society, even in our comparatively short life, lived long enough to see great gaps in the ranks of English design. Great names, great leaders have passed from the roll of our membership, but not their memory, or the effect and value of their work.

We are left to carry on the twin-lamp of Design and Handicraft as best we may. If we bear that lamp with steady hands, fully alive to the necessity of continual life and freedom of movement in art, while conscious of the value of preserving certain historic traditions, founded upon real artistic experiences, and the necessities of material and use, we may yet, I hope,

be of service in our exhibition and other work, if we succeed in comprehending within our membership the best elements of both new and old, in maintaining the highest standard of taste and workmanship, and in placing, so far as we are able, the best after its kind, in our honest opinion, before the public.



## OF THE TEACHING OF ART

THE teaching of Art! Well, to begin with, you cannot teach it. You can teach certain methods of drawing and painting, carving, modelling, construction, what not—you can teach the words, you can teach the logic and principles, but you cannot give the power of original thought and expression in them.

Of the  
Teaching of  
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Of course a man's ideas on the subject of teaching necessarily depend upon his general views of the purport and scope of art.

Is Art (1) a mere imitative impulse—a record of the superficial facts and phases of nature in a particular medium? or, is it (2) the most subtle and expressive of languages, taking all manner of rich and varied forms in all sorts of materials, under the paramount impulse of the selective search for beauty?

Naturally, our answer to the question what should be taught, and how to teach it depends upon our answer to these questions. But the greater includes the less, and, though one may be biassed by the second definition given above, it does not follow that the first may not have its due place in a course of study.

The question, then, really is, what is the most helpful course of study towards the attainment of that desirable facility of workmanship, that cultivation of the natural perception, feeling, and judgement in the use of those elements and materials in their ultimate expression and realization of beauty?

And here we have to stop again on our road, and ask what is this quality of beauty, and whence does it come?

Without exactly attempting a final or philosophical account of it, we may call it an outcome and efflorescence of the delight in life under happy conditions. The history of art and nature shows its evolution in ever varying degree and form, constantly affected by external conditions, and modified by place and circumstance, following, in the development of the sensibility to ideas and impressions of beauty, through the refinement of the senses and the intellect, much the same course as the development of man himself as a social and reflective animal.

As we cannot see colour without light, neither can we expect sensibility to beauty to grow up naturally amid sordid and depressing surroundings.

To begin with, then, before we can have art we must have sensibility to beauty, and before we can have either we must have conditions which favour their existence and growth. We must have an atmosphere. A condition of life where they come naturally, with the colours of the dawn and the sunset; where the common occupations are not too burdensome, and the



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Moir

Sketch for  
Figure Com-  
position.  
" Frederigo  
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rossa,"  
By Lancelot  
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Of the  
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anxiety for a living not too great to leave any surplus energy or leisure for thought and creative impulse; where the cares of an empty life, and

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under Prof.  
Moir



Time Study.  
By H. Parr

the deceitfulness of riches do not choke them; where art has not to struggle, as for very life, for every breath it draws, and ask itself the why and wherefore of its existence.

For art is not an independent accidental un-

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under Prof.  
Moira



Time  
Studies of  
Figures in  
Action. By  
H. Parr



related phenomenon, but is the result, as we find it in its various manifestations, of long ages of growth, and co-operative tradition and sympathy.

Seeking beautiful art, organic and related in all its parts, we turn naturally to places and periods of history which are the culminating points in such a growth. To Athens in the Phidian age, for instance; to almost any European city in the Middle Ages; to one of our own village churches, even, where the nineteenth-century restorer has not been; to Venice or Florence in the early renaissance, rather than to modern London or Paris. But even limiting ourselves to our own day we have got to expect far more from the man who has worked from his youth up in what we call "an atmosphere of art," even if it is only that of the modern painter's studio, than from a mill hand, say, trained to some one special function, perhaps, in some process of machine industry, whose life is spent in monotonous toil and whose daily vision is bounded by chimney-pots and back-yards.

A pinch of the salt of art and culture at measured intervals, will never counteract the adverse and more prominent influence of the daily, hourly surroundings on the eye and mind. It is hopeless if one hour of life's day says "yes," if all the other twenty-three say "no" continually.

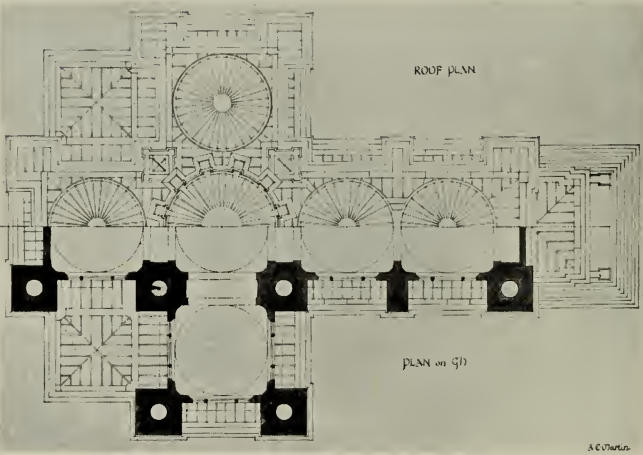
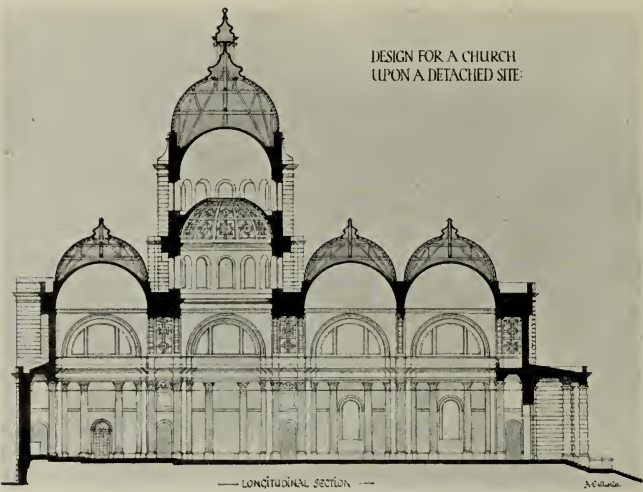
Our fundamental requirements then, are a sympathetic atmosphere, a favourable soil and climate for the raising of the seed of art in its fullest sense; which means, practically, a reason-

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Design and  
Plan of a  
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Church. By  
A. E. Martin

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Design for  
Tapestry.  
By E. W.  
Tristram



able human life, with fair play for the ideas and senses, and good for the drama of the eye. To how many is this now possible?

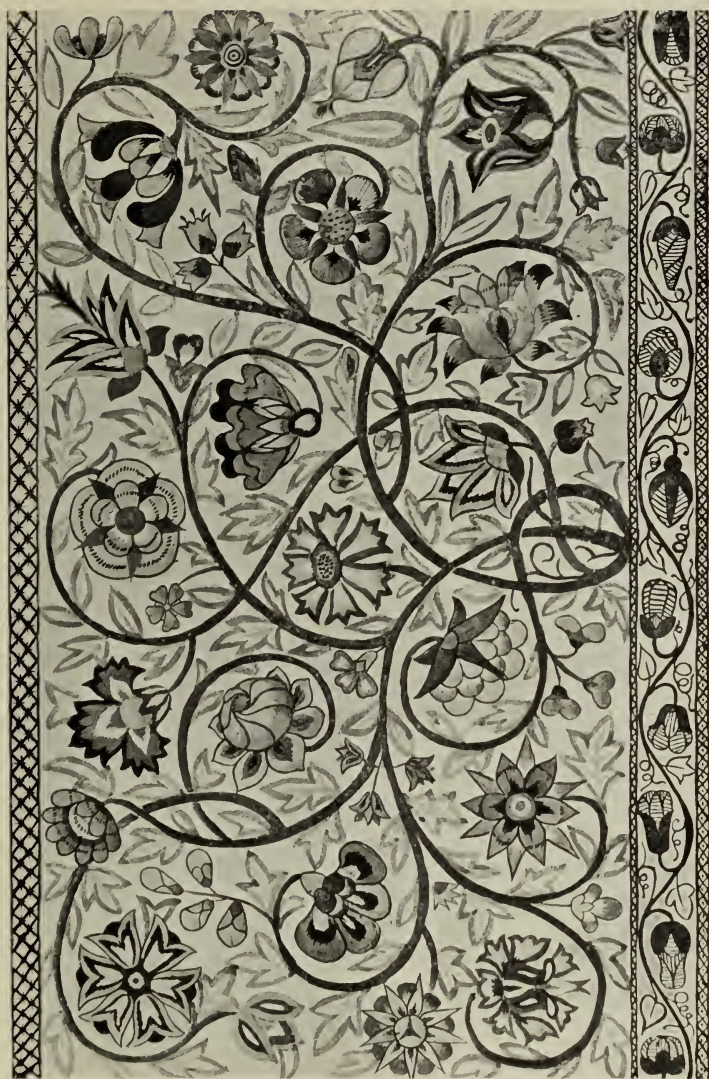
Granting this, however, would go a long way towards solving the next problem—What to teach? for we should then find that art was not separable from life.

Children are never at a loss what to learn, or what to teach themselves, when they see any manner of interesting work going on and have access to tools and materials. They gather at the door of the village blacksmith, or at the easel of the wayside painter. Demonstration is the one thing needed—demonstration, demonstration, always demonstration. This is, perhaps, at the bottom of the present strong determination to French modes on the part of our younger painters. You can learn this part of the painting business because you can see it done. You could learn any craft if you saw it done, and had ordinary aptitude. But it does not follow that there is no art but painting, and that impressionism is its prophet.

It might be said almost that the modern cabinet or competitive gallery picture, unrelated to anything but itself, and not always that, has destroyed painting *as an art of design*.

I would, therefore, rather begin with the constructive, and adaptive, side of art. Let a student begin by some knowledge of architectural construction and form. Let him thoroughly understand the connection, both historic and artistic, between art and architecture. Let him become thoroughly imbued with a sense of the essential





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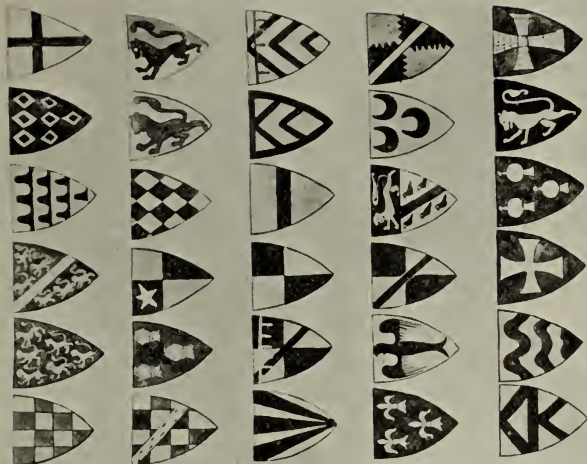
Design for  
Embroidery.  
By Miss  
L. M.  
Dunkley

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Museum  
Studies in  
Embroidery.  
By Miss  
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Sheet of  
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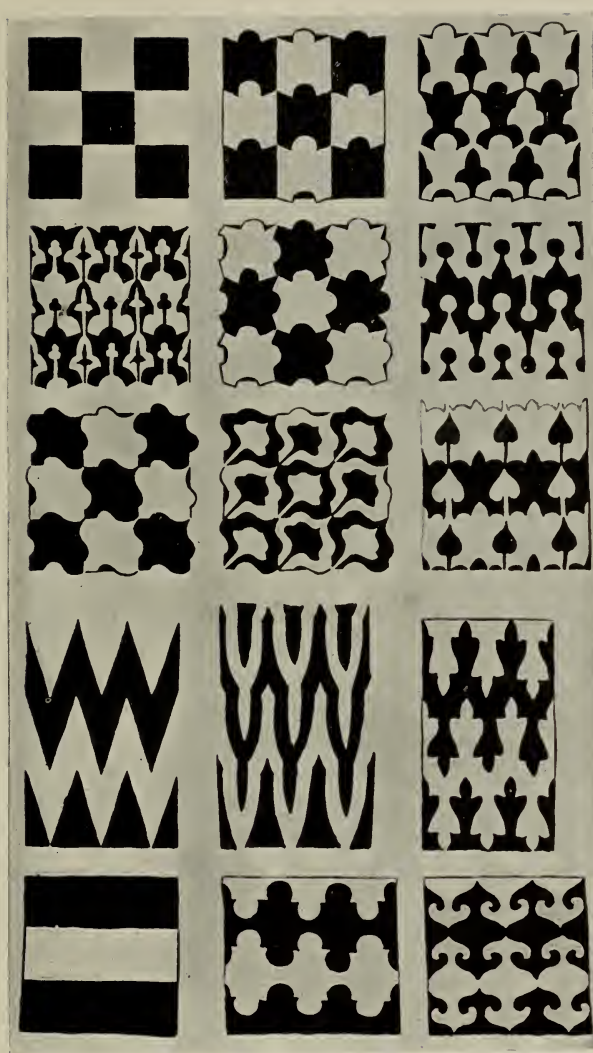
unity of art, and not, as is now so often the case, be taught to practise some particular technical trick, or meaningless elaboration; or be led to suppose that the whole object of his studies is to draw or paint any or every object from the pictorial point of view exclusively. Let the two sides of art be clearly and emphatically put before him, which may be distinguished broadly as: (1) Aspect, or the imitative; (2) Adaptation, or the imaginative. Let the student see that it is one thing to be able to make an accurate presentment of a figure, or any object, in its proper light and shade and relief in relation to its background and surroundings; and quite another to express them in outline, or to make them into organic pieces of decoration to fit a given space.

Then, again, he should perceive how the various media and materials of workmanship naturally determine the character and treatment of his design, while leaving ample range for individual choice and treatment.

The constructive and creative capacity may exist in a high degree without any corresponding power of drawing in the pictorial sense, and considerable proficiency in some of the simpler forms of various handicrafts, such as ornamental modelling in relief, wood-carving, and repoussé work, is quite possible of attainment by quite young people; whereas the perception of certain subtleties in pictorial methods of representation, such as perspective, planes, and values, and the highly selective sense which deals with them are matters of matured mental perception, as well



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Studies in  
Counter-  
change. By  
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Spooner



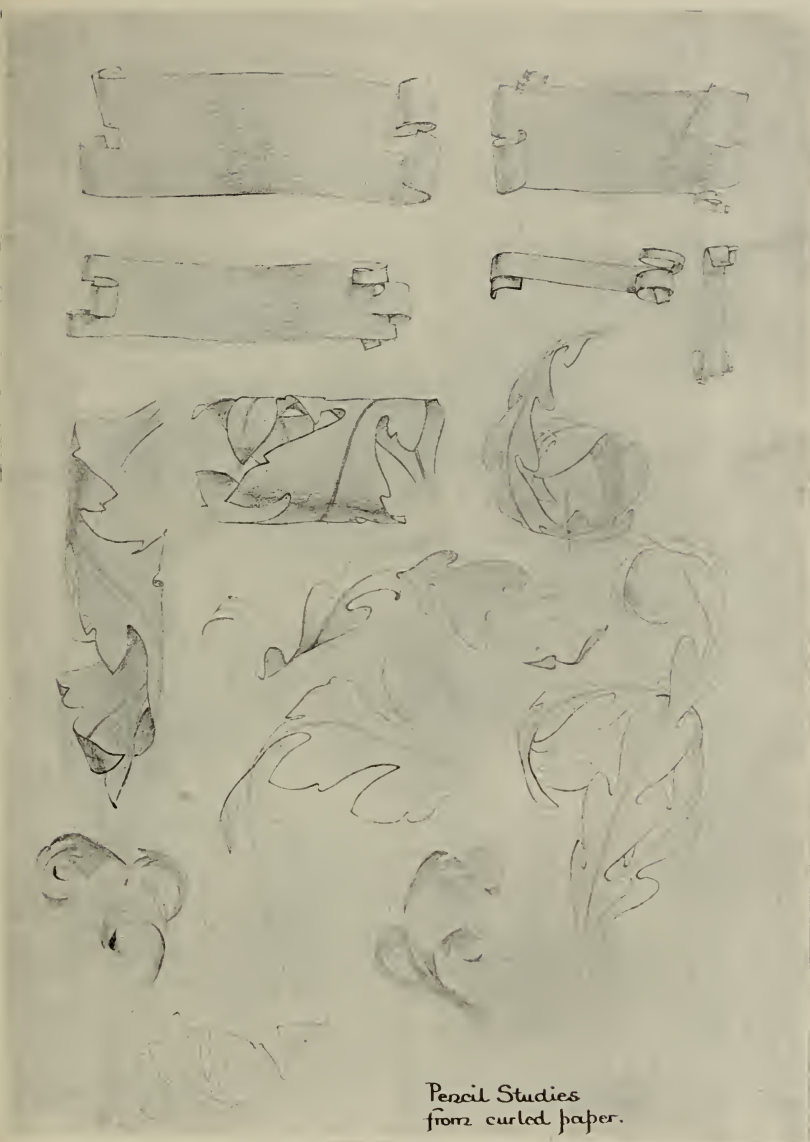
as technical experience and practical skill. The same is true as to power of design. It is a question of growth.

So that there are natural reasons for a primary training in some forms of handicraft, which, while affording the same scope for artistic feeling, present simpler problems in design and workmanship, and give a tangible and substantial foundation to start with.

In thus giving the first places in a course of study in art to architecture, decorative design, and handicraft we are only following the historic order of their progress and development. When the arts of the Middle Ages culminated in the work of the great painters of the earlier Renaissance, their work showed how much more than makers of easel-pictures they were, so that a picture, apart from its central interest and purpose was often a richly illustrated history of contemporary design in such things.

Now, my contention is, that whereas a purely pictorial training, or such a training as is now given with that view, while it often fails to be of much service in enabling a student to paint a picture, unfits him for other fields of art quite as important, and leaves him before the simplest problem of design helpless and ignorant; while a training in applied design, with all the forethought, sense of beauty and fitness, ingenuity and invention it would tend to call forth, would not only be a good practical education in itself, but would enormously strengthen the student for pictorial work, especially as regards design and the value of line, while he would get a clear

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Studies of  
Scroll  
Forms. By  
W. G.  
Spooner

apprehension of the limitations of different kinds of art, and their analogies.

In studying form, if we model as well as draw, we enormously increase our grasp and understanding of it, and so it is as regards art generally that studies in every direction will be found to bear upon and strengthen us in our main direction.

I should, therefore, endeavour to teach relatively—to teach everything in relation not only to itself, but to its surroundings and conditions; design in relation to its materials and purpose; the drawing of form in relation to other forms; the logic of line; pictorial colour and values in relation to nature but controlled by pictorial fitness.

The ordinary practice of drawing and study from the human figure—the Alpha and Omega of all study in art—does not seem sufficiently alive to the help that may be gained by comparative anatomy. We should study the figure, not only in itself and for itself, but in relation to the forms of other animals, and draw the analogous parts and structures, side by side, not from the anatomist's point of view but the artist's. We should study them in life and action no less.

Now a word as regards action. We have been recently told that artists have been fools since the world began in their manner of depicting the action of animals, or rather animals in action, but it was by a gentleman who (though I fully acknowledge the value and interest of Mr. Muybridge's studies and discoveries) did

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Lethaby



Studies of  
Plant Form.  
By W. G.  
Spooners

not appear to have distinguished between moments of arrested action, and the action represented, which is the sum of those moments. Instantaneous photographs of animals in action will tell you whereabouts their legs are found at a given moment, but it is only when they are put in a consecutive series, and turned on the inside of a horizontal wheel before the eye that they represent action, and then it is illusion, not art. Now the artist has to represent or to suggest action without actual movement of any kind, and he has generally succeeded not by arresting the literal action of the moment, but by giving the sum of consecutive moments, much as the wheel does, but without the illusory trick. His business is to represent, not to imitate. Art after all is not science or analysis, or we might expect fidelity to the microscope on the part of our painters and draughtsmen. Until we all go about with photographic lenses in our heads instead of eyes, with dry plates or films instead of retinas, we shall, I fancy, still be interested in what artists have to say to us about nature and their own minds, whether instantaneous impressions, or the long result of years.

This is only one of the many questions which rise up at every step in the study of art, and I know of no system of teaching which adequately deals with them. No doubt our systems of teaching or attempting to teach art want constant overhauling, like most other systems. When we are overhauling the system of life itself, it is not wonderful.

I do not, of course, believe in any cast-iron





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system of education from any point of view. It must be varied according to individual wants and capacities. It must be made personal and interesting or it is of little good; and no system, however efficient, will manufacture artists in anything: any more than the most brilliant talents will do away with the necessity of passionate devotion to work, careful thought, close observation and constant practice which produce that rapid and intimate sympathy of eye and hand, and make them the responsive and delicate interpreters of that selective and imaginative impulse which results in Art.



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## OF METHODS OF ART TEACHING

METHODS of teaching in art are, I take it, like most other human methods, of strictly relative value, depending at all times largely upon the current conception of the aims, purpose, and province of art.

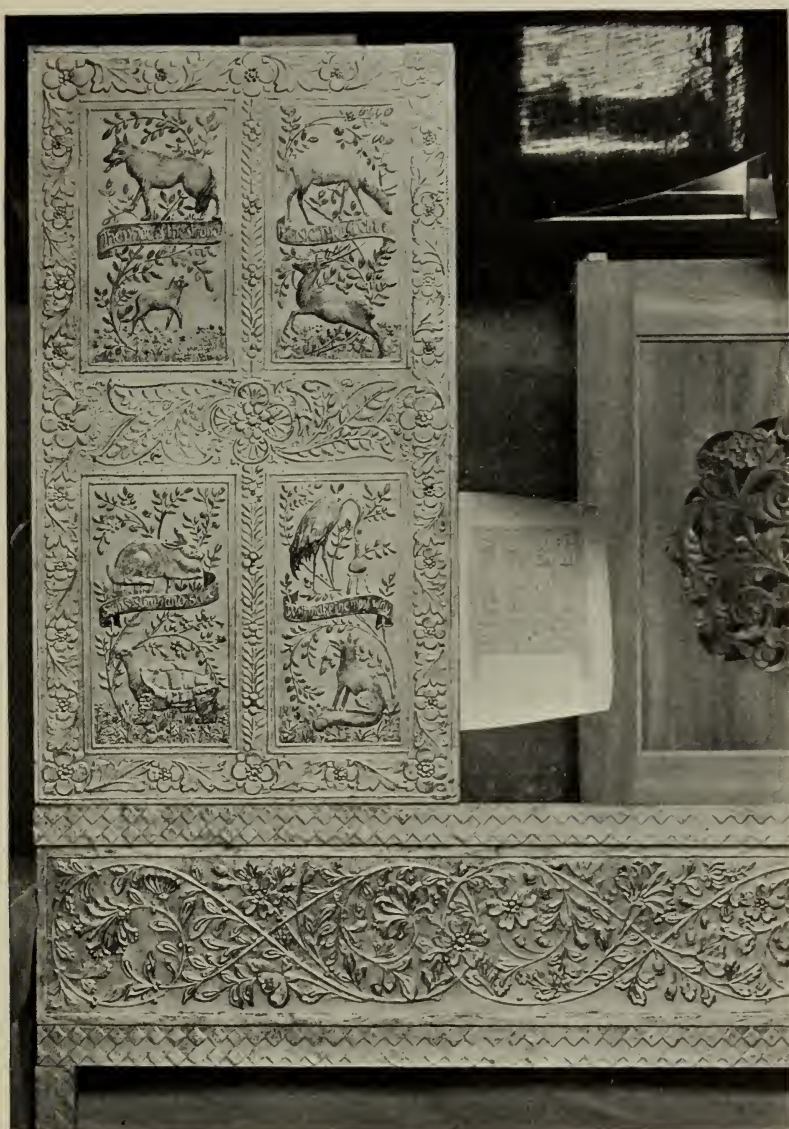
As this conception necessarily alters from time to time, influenced by all sorts of subtle changes in the social organism (manifesting themselves in what we call Taste), as well as by fundamental economic conditions, so the ideas of what are the true methods in art teaching change also.

Naturally in a time when scepticism is so profound as to reach the temerity of asking such a question as "What is art?" there need be no perceptible shock when inquiries are instituted as to the best methods of art teaching. As important witnesses in the great case of the position of art in general education, or *commercial interests v. the expansion of the human mind and the pleasure of life*—methods of art teaching have to be put in the box. What do they say?

Well, have we not the good old (so-called) Academic methods always with us?



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lege of Art:  
Design  
School Craft  
Classes,  
Gesso, under  
Mr. G. Jack



Cabinet de-  
signed and  
decorated in  
Gesso. By  
J. R. Shea



Of Methods  
of Art  
Teaching

The study of the antique by means of shaded drawings, stumped or stippled "up to the nines" (if not further), leading on to equally elaborate life-studies, which somehow are expected to roll the impressions of eight, ten, or more sittings into one entirety—and wonderfully it is done, too, sometimes.

Are we not led to these triumphs through the winsome defiles of freehand and shaded

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Design  
School Craft  
Classes,  
Pottery  
under  
Mr. Lunn



Group of  
Pottery de-  
signed and  
executed by  
the Students

drawing from the cast, perhaps accompanied by cheerful model drawing, perspective puzzles, and anatomical dissections, and drawings of the human skeleton seen through antique figures, which seem to anticipate the Röntgen rays?

"The proper study of mankind is man," but according to the Academic system it is practically the *only* study—study of the human frame and form isolated from everything else.

No doubt such isolation, theoretically at least, concentrates the attention upon the most diffi-

cult and subtle of all living organisms; but the practical question is, do these elaborate and more or less artificial studies really give the student a true grasp of form and construction? Are they not too much practically taken as still-life studies, and approached rather in the imitative spirit?

Then, again, such studies are set and pursued rather with the view to equipping the student with the necessary knowledge of a figure painter. They are intended to prepare him for painting anything or everything (and generally, now, *anything* but something classical) that can be comprehended or classified as "an easel picture"—that is to say, a work of art not necessarily related to anything else. It is something to be exhibited (while fresh) in the



Royal College of Art:  
Design  
School Craft  
Classes,  
Wood-Carving, under  
Mr. G. Jack

Wood-Carving by  
J. R. Shea

Royal Col-  
lege of Art:  
Design  
School Craft  
Classes,  
Stained  
Glass, under  
Mr. C. W.  
Whall



Panel de-  
signed and  
executed by  
A. Kidd



Royal Col-  
lege of Art:  
Modelling  
School  
under Prof.  
Lanteri.

Frieze by  
J. A. Steven-  
son



open market with others of a like (or dis-like) nature, and, if possible, to be purchased and hung in a gallery, or in the more or less darkness of the private dwelling—"to give light unto them that are in the house."

Works of sculpture (or *modelling* as she is generally practised) may not fare any better (privately) in the end, when one remembers the busts placed back to the windows, or the marble statue forced to an unnatural whiteness by purple velvet hangings—but, certainly, the methods of teaching seem more in relation to the results.

To begin with, a sculptor's or modeller's figure (unless a decorative group or an architectural ornament) is isolated and has no background; and it is undoubtedly a severe test of skill and knowledge to model a figure in clay in the round from the life. Some are of the opinion that it is more difficult to model perfectly a basso-relievo, but there is no end to the work in the round.

I am really inclined to think that ever since the Italian Renaissance the sculptor's and modeller's art and aims have dominated methods of art teaching generally, and have been chiefly responsible for what I have termed the Academic method, which seems mainly addressed to the imitation of solid bodies in full relief, or projection in light and shade on a plane surface, which method indeed in painting, at least, is quite opposed to the whole feeling and aim of Decorative art.

In architecture, on the classical and Academic method, the young student is put through the



# PAUL

I an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace, from God, the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day: greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee:

Page of Text,  
written by  
J. P. Bland

five orders, and is expected to master their subtle proportions before he can appreciate their artistic value, and with but a remote chance of making such knowledge of practical value, in a country and climate to which such architectural features are generally unsuitable.

Our methods of art teaching have sailed along in this stately way from time immemorial. Does not Burlington House stand where it did?

At all events a new spirit is abroad, since the arts and handicrafts of design have asserted themselves.

Methods of art teaching in relation to these must at any rate be definite enough. Each craft presents its own conditions and they must be signed, sealed, and delivered at the gate, before any triumph or festival is celebrated within.

Such conditions can be at least comprehended and demonstrated; materials can be practised with and understood, and even if invention in design can never be taught, on the negative side there are certain guides and finger-posts that may at least prevent lapses of taste, and loss of time.

The designer may learn what different means are at his disposal for the expression of line and form; for the colour and beauty of nature, re-created in the translucent glass or precious enamel, or speaking through the graphic printed line or colour of the wood-block—eloquent in a thousand ways by means of following the laws of certain materials in as many different arts.

What are the qualities demanded of a designer in such arts? quickness of invention and

hand, power of direct definition of form. The expressive use of firm lines; sensitive appreciation of the value of silhouetted form, and the relief and effect of colours one upon another; perception of life and movement; knowledge of

Of Methods  
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Teaching



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lege of Art:  
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School  
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Lanteri

Panel by  
Vincent Hill

the growth and structure of plants; sense of the relation of the human form to geometric spaces, and power over its abstract treatment, as well as over the forms of the fowls of the air and beasts of the field.

This is a glimpse of the vista of the possibilities of teaching methods opened up by the

arts of design, and in so far as those arts are understood and practised and sought after as important and necessary to the completion of a harmonious and refined life, so will our methods of art instruction have to adapt themselves to meet those new old demands.

## NOTE ON TOLSTOI'S "WHAT IS ART?"

COUNT TOLSTOI'S book is, for the most part, a very fierce and trenchant attack upon modern, as well as some ancient art, from the point of view of a social reformer and an ascetic and iconoclastic zealot. In a true Christian spirit he denounces nearly everybody and everything, and indeed, metaphorically speaking, and to his own satisfaction at least, first sacks and burns the houses of the aesthetic philosophers from Baumgarten to Grant Allen, flinging their various definitions of beauty to the winds; and he proceeds to make a bonfire of the most eminent names and works, both ancient and modern, and including Sophocles, Euripides, Æschylus, Aristophanes, Dante, Tasso, Milton, Shakespeare; Raphael, Michael Angelo's "Last Judgement," parts of Bach and Beethoven; Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Verlaine, Mallarmé, Puvis de Chavannes, Klinger, Böcklin, Stück, Schneider, Wagner, Liszt, Berlioz, Brahms, and Richard Strauss;—no English need apply, I was about to say, but he includes Burne-Jones. And then, waving his torch, he points

Note on Tolstoi's "What is Art?"



Note on Tolstoi's "What is Art?"

to the regeneration of art in the re-organization of Society, tempered by the opinion of the plain man and—leaves the question still burning.

Of an ideal of beauty in art he will have none. Beauty appears to his ascetic mind (or mood) as something synonymous with pleasure, and therefore more or less sinful and to be avoided: yet, realist as he appears to be at times, he is quite as vague and idealistic as the idealists he scorns when he speaks of a "Christian art" which is to take the place of modern corruptions. Tolstoi's view of art, too, is practically limited to literature, the drama, music, painting, and sculpture. (I am afraid he did not know of the Art Workers' Guild when he wrote his book, and seems ignorant of William Morris and the English movement.)

Only towards the end of the work (p. 171) does he mention "ornamental" art, or rather he speaks of "ornaments" (including "China dolls") and remarks that such as these "for instance, ornaments of all kinds are either not considered to be art, or considered to be art of a low quality. In reality" (however, he says), "all such objects, if only they transmit a true feeling experienced by the artist and comprehensible to everyone (however insignificant it may seem to us to be) are works of real good Christian art."

He then becomes aware, recalling his denial of "the conception of beauty" as supplying "a standard for works of art" that he is in an inconsistent position, and turns round and says that

“the subject-matter of all” kinds of ornamentation consists not in the beauty, but in the feeling (of admiration of, and delight in, the combination of lines and colours) which the artist has experienced and with which he infects the spectator.” This seems to be a cumbrous and roundabout way of saying that the thing is admired because it is beautiful.

Note on Tolstoi's “What is Art?”

Tolstoi, however, seems to have a rooted idea that there is something essentially selfish and narrow about the conception and ideal of Beauty and that it must be something necessarily exclusive, appealing only to a privileged or cultured class. He condemns the beauty which only appeals to a few, but admits that which appeals to many, though not because of its beauty, but because it unites so many in a common feeling of admiration.

The horrible word “infection” is constantly used. I do not know how far this may be the fault of the translation, and whether it is the exact equivalent for the Russian phrase, but somehow it has not a pleasant association as applied to the reception of ideas of art. Tolstoi says: “Art remains what it was and what it must be—nothing but the infection by one man of another, or of others, with the feelings experienced by the infector.”

This is his main point throughout—the communicable power of art, and he values it, apparently, solely for this power.

But this power of infection, as he calls it, is not the exclusive possession or distinctive characteristic of art. A man with a disease may

Note on Tolstoi's "What is Art?"

"infect" another, but you don't call it art. A fire may communicate some of its warmth to those who are cold, but we don't call it art. An angry man may punch you and infect you with his anger, so that you punch him in return, but we don't call it art—unless the art of self-defence is allowed to be an art.

It is true one is aware of the sort of physical test of good poetry—that it causes a shiver down the spinal column; and it is generally a true one, but whether it represents the shiver felt by the poet in writing one is not quite certain.

Besides, surely a work of art may communicate or suggest something more than was actually in the mind or emotions of the artist at the time, as by the power of association it may awaken different thoughts and feelings in many different minds.

To limit fine art only to those forms which are capable of appealing to everybody, and which communicate feelings and ideas which can be shared by humanity at large, must necessarily limit it to few and simple forms and types. No doubt Tolstoi fully realizes this, and he even recognizes that the art of the most universal appeal at the present day is apt to be rather trivial in form, such as "a song, or an amusing jest, intelligible to every one, or a touching story, or a drawing, or a little doll" (p. 165), and he elsewhere says that the producer of such things is doing far more good than the elaboration of a work to be appreciated only by a few.

Historic, romantic, or poetic art seems to have no attractions for Tolstoi. In fact, he jumps upon what he terms poetic art with immense vigour, and reserves his greatest vials of scorn for some of its modern exponents. He seems to have little perception of the law of evolution either in life or in art, which accounts for its very varied forms, and different spirit in different ages, and among different races and social conditions. Nor does he seem to recognize that every age demands a fresh interpretation of life in art. Form, spirit, and methods in art all change with the different temper of the times.

Note on Tolstoi's "What is Art?"

Tolstoi plays havoc with the critics, and his exposure of the shams, imitations, and pretentiousness in many forms of modern art is unsparing and often too true; and one feels in hearty sympathy with his desire for spontaneity and sincerity in art, as well as for a social state, a true co-operative commonwealth in which again might be realized that unity of purpose and sentiment upon which all forms of art depend for their widest appeal.

Tolstoi's ideal of a state in which all contribute to the useful labour of the community is a fine one, and, of course, this would condemn none to a life of monotonous toil or drudgery; but would afford leisure for thought and cultivation of the arts by those who had the real capacity in them; no one being attracted by commercial advantage or material profits, since, under these conditions, arts would be the spontaneous outcome of life, and freely offered for

Note on Tolstoi's "What is Art?"

the good of the community in the joy of producing it.

Tolstoi's real strength lies in his zeal for and advocacy of such a simple communal life, and this gives the real force to his arguments for a corresponding simple and universal art; and, indeed, one feels that it is this conception and his religious views that are always dominant in his mind, and existing forms of art are frankly condemned or approved so far as their influence is unfavourable or favourable to such views of life.

In a remarkable footnote on p. 170, however, he allows that he is "insufficiently informed" in all branches of art, and that he belongs to the class of people whose taste is "perverted," that "old inured habits" may cause him to "err," and he goes on to consign certain works of his own to the category of "bad art."

His deeply rooted idea that all good art must convey a definite message which can be universally understood gives the impression that he only values art in so far as this definite message can be read in it; and, by his denial of the validity of beauty as an ideal and object in art, he removes himself, curiously enough, from where his sympathies lie really, from the acknowledgment and appreciation of the far-reaching influence of beauty in the commonest things of daily life—things of use which the touch of art makes vocal—things without which even the Tolstoian ideal of simple useful life would be impossible, to which the spontaneous and traditional handicraft art of the peasant in



primitive countries has so largely contributed, and which reveal more definitely the character and artistic capacity and feeling of a people than whole galleries of self-conscious painting and sculpture.

Note on Tolstoi's "What is Art?"

## OF THE INFLUENCE OF MODERN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDI- TIONS ON THE SENSE OF BEAUTY

Of the In-  
fluence of  
Modern  
Social and  
Economic  
Conditions  
on the Sense  
of Beauty

THAT modern conditions of life are destruc-  
tive to the sense of beauty I do not doubt,  
yet I am by no means sure that sensitiveness to  
beauty—or to its absence—in our daily sur-  
roundings is so very common (or even that there  
is a common understanding as to the idea of  
beauty), that such a proposition would obtain  
general assent without further explanation, and,  
as I have undertaken to open the case for the  
prosecution, if I may so term it, I will try to  
make clear my reasons and conclusions on the  
matter.

My first witness shall be London, as London  
is typical and focuses most of the effects of  
modern, social, and economic conditions. Now  
we hear a great deal of the beauty of London,  
but probably those who talk of her beauty are  
really only thinking of certain beauty-spots.  
Vast as London is, most of us really live for the  
most part in a comparatively small London.  
Outside our usual haunts lies a vast unknown  
region, of which, indeed, we obtain occasional  
glimpses on being obliged to travel across or  
through the multi-county city.

Those whose London is bounded on the west by Kensington Gardens and on the east by Mayfair, do not figure to themselves Clerkenwell or Ratcliff Highway, Bethnal Green or Bow, and would not care to embrace the vast new suburbs spreading over the green fields in every direction, or even the comparatively select slums in the shadow of Belgravian mansions.

Supposing we approached our metropolis by any one of the great railway lines—there is nothing to indicate we are entering the greatest and wealthiest city in the world. We pass rows and rows of mean dwellings—yellow brick boxes with blue slate lids—crowded close to the railway in many places, with squalid little backyards. We fly over narrow streets, and complex webs and net-works of railway lines, telegraph and telephone wires, myriad smoking chimney-pots, steaming, throbbing works of all kinds, sky-signs and the wonders of the parti-coloured poster-boards, which pursue one into the station itself, flaring on the reluctant and jaded sight with ever-increasing importunity and iteration, until one recalls the philosopher who remarked: “Strange that the world needs so much pressing to accept such apparently obvious—and sometimes startlingly obvious—advantages.”

All sense of architectural proportion inside the station, however large, is lost by the strident labels of all sorts and sizes; and images of all sorts of scales and colours, stick, like huge postage stamps, wherever likely to catch the eye.

The same thing meets us in the streets; in the busier commercial quarters, too, it is a common device to hang the name of the firm in gigantic gilt letters all over the windows and the upper stories of the shops; while the shops themselves become huge warehouses of goods, protected by walls of plate-glass, upon the edges of which apparently rest vast superstructures of flats and offices, playfully pinned together by telegraph poles, and hung with a black spider's web of wires as if to catch any soaring ideas of better things that might escape the *mêlée* of the streets.

In the streets themselves a vast crowd of all sorts, sizes, and conditions is perpetually hurrying to and fro, presenting the sharpest contrasts in their appearance and bearing. Here the spruce and prosperous business man, there the ragged cadger, the club idler and the out-o'-work. Here the lady in her luxurious carriage in purple and fine linen, and there the wretched seller of matches. Modern street traffic, too, is of the most mixed and bewildering kind, and the already perilous London streets have been made much more so by the motor in its various forms of van and bus, business or private car. The aspect of a London street during one of the frequent blocks is certainly extraordinary, so variously sorted and sized are the vehicles wedged in an apparently inextricable jumble; while the railways and tubes burrowed underground only add fresh streams of humanity to the traffic instead of relieving it. Yet it has been principally to relieve the congested traffic

Wentworth  
Street,  
Whitechapel



From a  
Photograph  
by F. Frith  
and Co.



of London that the great changes have been made which have practically transformed the town, sweeping away many historic buildings and relics of the past, and giving a general impression of rapid scene-shifting to our streets.

The most costly and tempting wares are displayed in the shops in clothing, food, and all the necessities of life, as well as fantastic luxuries and superfluities in the greatest profusion—"things that nobody wants made to give to people who have no use for them"—yet, necessities or not, removed only by the thickness of the plate glass from the famished eyes of penury and want.

The shops, too, are not work-shops. The goods appear in the windows as if by magic. Their producers are hidden away in distant factories, working like parts of a machine upon parts of wholes which perhaps they never see complete.

Turning to the residential quarters we see ostentation and luxury on the one hand and cheap imitation, pretentiousness, or meanness and squalor on the other. We see the aforesaid brick boxes which have ruined the aspect of most of our towns; we have the pretentious villa with its visitors' and servants' bells; we have the stucco-porticoed town "mansion," with its squeeze hall and umbrella stand; or we have the desirable flat, nearer to heaven, like the cell of a cliff-dweller, where the modern citizen seeks seclusion in populous caravansaries which throw every street out of scale where they rear their Babel-like structures.

I have not spoken of the gloom of older-fashioned residential quarters, frigid in their respectability, which, whatever centres of light and leading they may conceal, seem outwardly to turn the cold shoulder to ordinary humanity, or peep distrustfully at a wicked world through their fanlights.

Many of the features I have described are found also in most modern cities in different degrees, and are still more evident in the United States, where there is nothing ancient to stem the tide of modern—shall we say progress? In justice to New York, however, one must note that there is an important movement there among artists and architects and people interested in municipal affairs in the direction of checking the excesses of commercialism and in favour of dignity and beauty in the streets and public places. Such publications as "The Municipal Journal" bear witness to this, so that there is hope for the future. So may it be here.

Turning from the aspects of houses to humans—take modern dress—in our search for the beautiful! Well National if not distinctive costume—except of the working and sporting sort, court dress, collegiate robes and uniforms—has practically disappeared, and, apart from working dress in working hours, one type of ceremonial, or full dress, is common to the people at large, and that of the plainest kind, with whatever differences of cut and taste in detail. I mean for men, of course. Among the undisputed rights of woman the liberty to dress as she

pleases, even under recognized types for set occasions, and with constant variety and change of style, is not a little important, and one that has very striking effects upon the aspects of modern life we are considering. It is true this liberty may be checked by the decrees of eminent modistes and limited by the opinion of Mrs. Grundy, or the frank criticism of the boy-in-the-street; and it is more than probable that the exigencies of trade have something to do with it also.

It is, however, too important an element in the ensemble of life to be ignored or undervalued in any way, as women's dress affords one of the few opportunities of indulging in the joy of colour.

Men suffer the tyranny of the tall hat, as the outward and visible sign of respectability—surely far more so than Carlyle's gig. Instead of "gigmanity," it has become tophatmanity. The "stove-pipe" is the crown of the modern king, the financier—the business man—he who must be obeyed. (I understand it is as much as a city clerk's place is worth for him to appear in any other head gear.) Ladies, too, encourage it—with the black frock coat and the rest of the funereally festive attire of modern correct man. I suppose the garb is considered to act as an effective foil to the feast of colour indulged in by the ladies—as black frames to fair pictures—black commas, semi-colons, or full-stops agreeably punctuating passages of delicate colour!

The worst of it is that the beauty of women's

dress when it happens to be beautiful in modern times—as at present—seems to be a matter of accident and entirely at the mercy of fashion (or commerce!) here to-day and gone to-morrow, and, alas—tell it not among the pioneers!—lovely woman, our only hope for variety in colour and form in modern life, in her determination to descend into the industrial and professional arena and commercially compete with men, not unfrequently shows a tendency to take a leaf out of his tailor's pattern-book, and to adopt or adapt more or less of the features of modern man's prosaic, possibly convenient and durable, but certainly summary and unromantic attire.

Of the Influence of Modern Social and Economic Conditions on the Sense of Beauty

Well, I think, on the whole, the pictures which modern life in London, or any great capital displays, may be striking in their contrasts, weird in their suggestions, dramatic in their aspects—anything or everything in fact, except *beautiful*.

The essential qualities of beauty being harmony, proportion, balance, simplicity, charm of form and colour, can we expect to find much of it under conditions which make life a mere scramble for existence for the greater part of mankind?

Bellamy, in his "Looking Backward," gives a striking and succinct image of modern, social, and economic conditions in his illustration of a coach and horses. The coach is capitalism; it carries a minority; but even these struggle for a seat and to maintain their position, frequently falling off, when they either go under, or must

help to pull the coach with the majority, toiling in the traces of commercial competition.

However these conditions may, among individuals, be softened by human kindness, or some of its aspects modified by artistic effort, it does not change the cruelty and injustice of the system or its brutal and ugly aspects in the main. But, if modern civilization is only tolerable in proportion to the number and facility of the means of escape from it, we may find, at least, the beauty of the country, and of wild nature unimpaired?

Do we? We may escape the town by train, or motor—running the risk, in either case, of a smash—but we cannot escape commercial enterprise. The very trees and houses sprout with business-cards, and the landscape along some of our principal railways seems owned by vendors of drugs. Turning away our eyes from such annoyances, commercial competition again has us, in alluring us by all sorts and sizes in papers and magazines, which, like paper kites, can only maintain their position by an extensive tail. The tail—that is, the advertisements—keeps the kites flying, and the serial tale keeps the advertisements going perhaps, and the reader is obliged to take his news and views, social or political, sandwiched or flavoured with very various and unsought and unwanted condiments, pictorial or otherwise, which certainly ruin artistic effect. Thus public attention is diverted and—nobody minds! But it is in these ways that the materials of life—whereof the sense of beauty and its gratification is no unimportant



part—are destroyed, as it were, in getting our living—well, perhaps it would be truer to say, in some cases, a substantial percentage on our investments.

In obedience to the rule of the great God Trade, too, whole districts of our fair country are blighted and blackened, and whole populations are condemned to mechanical and monotonous toil to support the international race for the precarious world-market.

Under the same desperate compulsion of commercial competition, agriculture declines and the country-side is deserted. The old country life with its festivals and picturesque customs has disappeared. Old houses, churches, and cottages have tumbled into ruin, or have suffered worse destruction by a process of smartening-up called “restoration.” The people have crowded into the overcrowded towns, increasing the competition for employment, the chances of which are lessened by the very industry of the working-classes themselves, and so our great cities become blindly huger, dangerous, and generally unlovely, losing, too, by degrees, the relics of historic interest and romance they once possessed.

Even in the arts and among the very cultivators of beauty we detect the canker of commercialism. The compulsion of the market rules supply and demand. The idea of the shop dominates picture shows, and painters become as specialized as men of science, and genius requires as much puffing as a patent medicine. Every one must have his trade label, and woe

Of the Influence of Modern Social and Economic Conditions on the Sense of Beauty

to the artist who experiments, or discovers capacities for other things than his label covers.

Every new and promising movement in art has been in direct protest and conflict with the prevailing conditions, and has measured its success by its degree of success in counteracting them, and, in some sense, producing new conditions. The remarkable revival of the handicrafts of late years may be quoted as an instance. But it is a world within a world; a minority producing for a minority, although it has done valuable work even as a protest, and has raised the banner of handwork and its beauty in an age of machine industry.

Other notable movements of a protesting or protective or mitigating nature are at work in the form of societies for the protection of ancient buildings—for the preservation of the beauty of natural scenery, for the abolition of smoke, for checking the abuse of advertising, for the increase of parks and gardens and open spaces. Indeed, it would seem as if the welfare of humanity and the prospects of a tolerable life under modern conditions were handed over to such societies, since it does not seem to be anybody's business to attend to what is everybody's business, and we have not even a minister to look after such interests. The very existence of such societies, however, is a proof of the danger and destruction to which beauty is exposed under modern conditions.

Social conditions are the outcome of economic conditions. In all ages it has been mainly the system under which property is held—the owner-

ship of the means of production and exchange—which has decided the forms of social life. The expansion of capital and the power of the financier are essentially modern developments, and unrestricted commercial competition seems to lead direct to monopoly—a hitherto unexpected climax. Modern life becomes an unequal race, or scramble for money, place, power, or mere employment. The social (or rather, *un-*social) pressure which results, really causes those sordid aspects, pretences, and brutal contrasts we deplore. Private ownership is constantly opposed to public interest, and the narrow point of view of immediate individual profit as the determining factor in all transactions obscures larger issues and stultifies collective action for the public good.

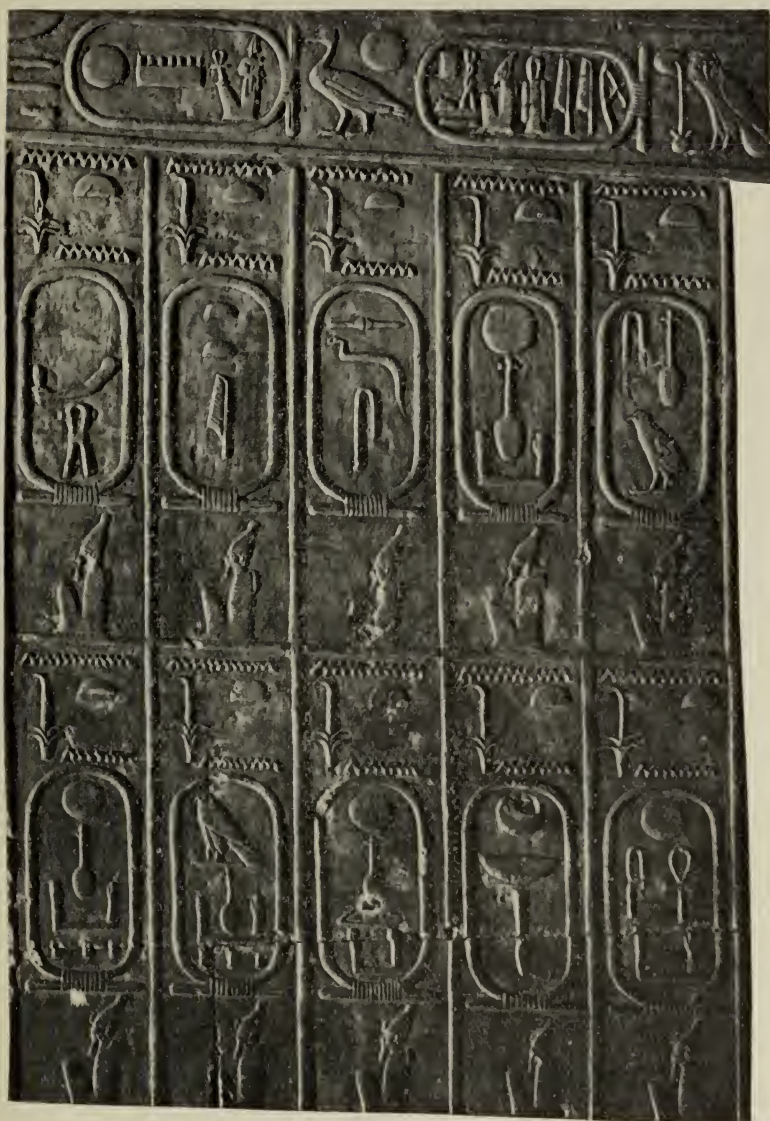
Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, perhaps I have said enough to support the case of Beauty against modern, social, and economic conditions. I do not ask for damages—they are incalculable. She stands before you, a pathetic figure, obscured in shreds and patches, driven from pillar to post, disinherited, a casual, and obliged to beg her bread, who should be a welcome and honoured guest in every city, in every house, bearing the lamp of art, and bringing comfort and joy to all.

## OF THE SOCIAL AND ETHICAL BEARINGS OF ART

Of the Social  
and Ethical  
Bearings of  
Art

THE very existence of art in any form among a people is itself evidence of some kind of social life; and, indeed, as regards pre-historic or ancient life, is often the only record left of life at all.

From its earliest dawn in the pre-historic etchings of the cave-dweller, to the hieroglyphics of the Egyptian; the sculptured slabs of the Ninevite and the Persian; from the treasury of Athens, and the spoils of Troy, to the refinement and monumental beauty of the Parthenon marbles—everywhere art (at first identical with language, or picture-writing) is eloquent of the mode of life; the ideas and ideals which have held sway in the human mind, until they have become precipitated, or crystallized, for us in antique architecture and sculpture, and painting, and the sister arts of design. Until every fragment of woven stuff, every bead and jewel, every fragment of broken pottery still speaks to us out of the past with its “half-obliterated tongue” of the life and thought which have gone away, of buried hopes and fears, of the loves and



Egyptian  
Hieroglyphics on  
a Wall  
Decoration

Abydos:  
Temple of  
Seti



strife, of the pride and power, which have left but these frail relics to tell their tale.

The keen, observant eye of the primitive hunter noted down unerringly the outlines of the fierce animals he stalked and slew. The same unerring perception of typical form reappears formalized, and more and more abstracted, in the hieroglyphic, which, using the familiar animals and objects of Eastern life as symbols, becomes finally cast, by use and wont, in the course of evolution, into the rigid abstractions of the alphabet. This, though in calligraphic and typographic art entering another course of development, has become quite distinct from the graphic and depicting power which appears to have been its origin; but they are still closely and constantly associated together in our books and newspapers, which form so large a part of, and so intimately reflect, our social life, and which have carried picture-writing into another and more complex stage.

The early Assyrian reliefs, too, in another way may often be considered as a series of emphatic historic statements—a graven writing on the wall. Their object, to record the conquests of kings or their prowess as lion-hunters, their battles and sieges, their prisoners taken, their weapons and munitions of war, the attributes of their symbolic deities. Their value was perhaps as much their descriptive and recording power as their decorative effect.

The archaic Greek passed through the same stage, only gradually evolving that exquisite artistic sense, until the monumental beauty and

heroic ideality of the Phidian work is reached to pass away again with the spirit and the life which gave it birth. The wave of Greek civilization rises to the crest of its perfection, and breaks and falls, yet spreads its influence, and leaves its impress upon all lands; unextinguished by the power and pomp of the Roman which succeeded, over which, indeed, in the artistic sense it triumphs, springing to new life in Italy, until it is found wandering among the ruins and trivialities of Pompeii, where the last stage of ancient life has been preserved, as it were, in amber.

We may drop some natural tears over the death of paganism, feeling that at all events, with all its corruptions, it has placed on record for us in art that joy of life, and the frank acknowledgement of man's animal nature (which no religion or philosophy can afford to leave out of account) and has reconciled them in forms of enduring refinement and beauty. A great deal must be set down to persistence of sunshine, but anyone glancing at what has been left us in various beautiful forms of art from the classical times and countries must feel how much larger an external part art must have played in that life; how constant and intimate must have been its appeal—from the storied pediment and frieze of the temple, to the gilded statues and bronze fountains in the public streets and squares—walls whereon the painter's fancy is let loose—everywhere colour, and overhead the blue sky of Italy or Greece. There was at any rate no room for monopoly in the pleasure of such an

external life. The *eye* of the slave was, at least, as free as that of his master, and the mere common possession of the spectacular pleasure of life is something. We feel too that the ancient wealth of beautiful art was the direct efflorescence of the life of the time. Everywhere the artist's and craftsman's eye must have been stimulated, the forms of man and woman moving without the restraint of formally cut costume, but freely draped according to the taste of the individual or the demands of the season, or circumstance. He could see the athlete in the arena, the beauty on her terrace, the philosopher in his grove, the colour and glitter of the market-place, the slave at his toil, the warriors clanging out to battle, and all these in the broad and full light of a southern sky. What wonder that his art took beautiful forms. Even the grave was robbed of its gloom by the Greek artist, and death was figured as a gentle and painless leave-taking between friends.

It is impossible to doubt that impressions of external beauty and harmony have a softening and humanizing effect upon the mind. I believe that we are unconsciously affected by such influences—that we are unconsciously happier when we live in pleasantly proportioned rooms, for instance, with harmoniously coloured and patterned walls and furniture. The nerves are soothed through the gentle stimulus of the eye dwelling on happy and refined forms and colours.

With the advent of Christianity, with the spiritual eye fixed upon another world, the form, with the spirit, of art naturally changed, and

though the main current of the new teaching was to make man indifferent to externals, after its first timid falterings in the dying traditions of classical design, we know that Christian art became one of the most powerful exponents of its creeds, and by the awe-inspiring influence of the solemn and mystic splendour of the Byzantine and early Gothic churches so impressed the imagination of men's minds that, other causes contributing, the Church became the great depository of artistic skill and inspiration, and used its power of emotional appeal to the utmost, by means of noble and impressive architectural form and proportion, afterwards heightened by every decorative means at the command of the Gothic craftsman in painted glass, carving, mosaic, painting and work of gold and silver and precious stones.

A great church was inscribed within and without with Bible history, and the lives of saints were enshrined for an ensample to all in the living language of the painter or the carver.

The evil-doer was terrorized by presentments of the torments of a very realistic hell, while the saint was lifted by ecstatic visions of angelic choirs and flower-starred meads of Paradise. Art in the Catholic Church was indeed a preacher and teacher of unparalleled eloquence and moral force. The unlettered could read its open book, the poor and the lame and the halt—and even the blind might be moved by the “full-voiced choir” and “pealing organ.”

The splendour and beauty of a mediaeval cathedral must have had what we should now

call quite an incalculable educational effect upon the people from the aesthetic and emotional side.

Besides this, the ordinary aspect of the towns must have been full of romance and interest: the variety, and quaint richness of the citizens' houses; the colour and fantastic invention in costume and heraldry; the constant shows and processions, such as those organized by the crafts' guilds, full of quaint allegory and symbolic meaning. A street might be solemn with the black and white gowns of monks and priests, or gay with flaunting banners and the flashing armour of knights, or the panoply of kings and queens. Great gilded wagons, bright with brave heraldry—instead of our black, varnished, respectable carriages, with a modest lozenge on their panels—though these have of late been rather put out of countenance by the more daring and dangerous motor car with its mysteriously veiled and masked occupants, a vehicle lately described by a wit as “a cross between a brougham and a battleship.”

Well, between the ordinary wonders of its mixed and perpetual traffic, we in London have now nothing left as a free popular spectacle but the Lord Mayor's Show, or the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race. There is the poster, it is true—that cheap and generally nasty “popular educator.” Not always so cheap, either, since one hears of Royal Academicians being secured for the service of pushing commerce at the price of a thousand pounds or so—though the result is generally not a good *poster*, but only an oil picture spoiled.



Human life, however disguised or uglified with unnatural and inharmonious surroundings, must, of course, always remain intensely interesting. If we all took to wearing sandwich boards to announce our personal tastes or wants to save trouble, I suppose a certain amount of drama would still be possible, and I have no doubt we should soon have aesthetic persons declaring that it was as fine a costume as a mediaeval herald's or Joseph's coat of many colours.

It does not seem as if we could take art and beauty naturally in this country, since the puritan frost came over us. We have suffered from stiffness in our aesthetic limbs ever since. A certain pedantry and affectation which have attached themselves to some parts of the question of art, seem to have created mistrust in the ordinary mind. The ordinary mind has been too much inured to ugliness, perhaps—and habit is dear to all of us. Conscious efforts to produce things of beauty are not always convincing, and even a thing of beauty does not look comfortable without harmonious environment. If Venus were to suddenly rise from the Serpentine (or from New York Harbour) she might be misunderstood.

If we are ever to have beauty in our common life again, beauty must spring naturally from its ordinary conditions, just as beautiful art always is inseparable from its material. Now, it is often said that art has always been the minister to wealth and power, that it has been the private possession of the rich, and its dwelling-place

the precincts of courts and the shelter of great houses. If, however, the results of art (so far as the art which appeals to the eye can ever be monopolized) have often become forms of private property, this is only so in a limited degree, and is only partially true; and in regard to the later detached or pictorial forms of art, or in the case of antique bric-à-brac.

Art, in its nobler monumental forms, by the necessity of its existence, has appealed to the whole people of a city or state from a Greek temple to a Gothic cathedral with all the arts of design in retinue.

If, in later days, artists were pressed into the service of kings, great nobles, merchant princes or millionaires, and art became largely tributary to their pomp and magnificence, it was at least at the *expense* of the whole people. And as, by degrees, partly owing to commercial and mechanical evolution, and partly to the inducement of greater personal credit, social distinction and sympathy (which, after all, are parts of commercial evolution or rather, perhaps, some of its effects) the artistic faculty was drawn more and more into purely pictorial channels, and partook more and more of the nature of portable and private property, its actual possession became a matter, more or less, for the rich. Even in this stage, however, it has made possible splendid public and national collections—as our own National Gallery, for instance, where the very choicest works of the greatest painters of all time are the actual possession of each and all of us.

Where there has been monopoly of art, and large masses of the people (the workers whose "surplus value" really pays for it) have been excluded from, or deprived of, its enjoyment and socializing influence, is it wonderful that monopoly in art should follow monopoly of land and the means of subsistence? or that those who refuse to recognize, or to respect, common rights in land, and common participation in the pleasures and refinements of life, should refuse to recognize common rights in art also?

The growing enlightenment and demand for justice on the part of the workers, and their growing power and capacity for combination under democratic institutions, will insist upon the abolition of such monopolies; and the spread of the feeling of fellowship and the inter-dependence of all workers will create a sounder public sentiment and morality in the matter of the uses of wealth and the social value of art.

I hope that we shall not be content as a people to remain satisfied with so little of the refining influence of art and beauty in our daily lives. We are beginning to realize the immense loss and deprivation their absence causes, and where they are not felt at all, where their warm rays, like the sun's, never penetrate, there is coarseness, brutality, and degradation. It is a noticeable fact, that harshness and roughness of manner and want of sympathy are usually found with an absence of sensibility to art in individuals. The aesthetic sense, indeed, is like a sixth sense added to the other five, or rather evolved from them. Yet we have, until recently, been

in the habit of shutting up our national museums and picture galleries on Sundays as if they were haunts of vice, instead of refining, intellectual and moral influences, and sources of unselfish pleasure. We allow the walls of our school rooms, for the most part, to be gaunt and bare, and give no greater stimulus to the children's and young people's imaginative reason than is to be gleaned from varnished, unillustrated maps and tame lithographs of wild animals.

But it is hardly surprising that the minds and imaginative faculties should be starved, when we know that the *bodies* so frequently are, as under our compulsory system of education it has been discovered poor children frequently go foodless to school.

Yet if common life was thought worth enriching by suggestions of heroism, poetry, and romance; if education was considered more as a means of developing *the whole nature*, than merely as a preparation for a narrow competitive commercial existence, might we not, from the storehouses of history and folk-lore, picture our school and college walls with great and typical figures of heroes, and founders and fighters for our liberties and the commonwealth, and make them glow with colour and suggestion? and I believe we should see its after results in a more refined and more spirited, more sympathetic, more united and self-respecting people.

Whether such changes can come before certain greater economic changes, comprehended by socialism, is another matter (I do not believe they can in their fulness), and I have no wish

to put the aesthetic cart before the economic horse, although conviction sometimes comes from attempting the impossible—or the right thing at the wrong stage.

The social character of the appeal to the eye is brought home to us by the involuntary impulse which, with a fine work of art before us, or some lovely natural scene, provokes such common exclamations as “Look at that!” “Oh! do look there!” “Did you ever see anything so beautiful!” and the like. This seems to show that people are not content, as a rule, to enjoy the pleasures of vision *alone*. They cannot look at a beautiful work without wanting others to see it also, and participate in the same emotional excitement and appreciative delight.

Appreciation and sympathy are also, of course, enormously stimulating to artists. They are like the answering ring to the coin of his thought when he casts it forth to the world, which tells him it is of true gold.

Works of art are like questions or problems put by their inventor to the public at large. If they are understood at once then the artist knows he is in touch with his questioner, and that he speaks in a tongue that is comprehended: but this is not always the case.

The conditions of the practice of art itself have undergone changes analogous to the evolutions of society, the sentiment of which it always reflects. From its earlier collective stages and typical forms, when all the arts of design were united in architecture with such



beautiful results, to its more individual and personal character in modern days, more especially in painting, we can trace an entire change of spirit. The focus of artistic feeling and expression is no longer centralized on religious ideals, mysteries, or mythologies, but is turned everywhere on the parti-coloured aspects of human life, and the changes of the face of nature. Its methods are no longer traditional but experimental, and its point of view personal, so that the position of a modern painter is not so much that of a musician taking his place in a great orchestra, and contributing his part to a great and harmonious whole, but rather that of a soloist, who claims our entire attention to his performance on a particular instrument—it may be only a tin whistle, or it may be, of course, the violin in the hands of a master.

This condition of things in art has had its effect on the individual practitioner, and the tendency is to set up individual codes of artistic morality, so that each can only be judged with reference to his own standard, and according to the dictates of his own aesthetic conscience or consciousness, and this perhaps may be quite the reverse of that of his brethren.

In every direction, however, the practice of art teaches the value of certain virtues as means towards the attainment of its higher aims and ideals: conscientiousness in workmanship—doing all that is fitting and needful to obtain certain results: the necessity of making certain sacrifices of lesser beauty, for instance, or minor truths, to express the higher beauty and

the more significant truth; for it is no more possible to "eat your cake and have it" in art, than it is in the affairs of life generally.

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Judgement and temperance have important parts to play in the making of the world of art; and that faithfulness to an ideal, and perseverance through all manner of technical and other difficulties and adverse circumstances, which carry a man through, and oblige him to exercise a certain self-restraint, to reach the goal he has set before himself.

So that the practice of art cannot be said to be without its ethical side, any more than its manifestations can be denied their social bearing and significance.

## OF ORNAMENT AND ITS MEANING

Of Orna-  
ment and its  
Meaning

THE decorative sense as expressed in the rich and varied field of surface ornament is now so much taken as a matter of course, and so associated with certain historic styles, racial types and climatic characteristics, that few care to look further into origins than such well-defined and comprehensive sources seem to contain, and doubtless did we know all about our historic styles (a knowledge of which every art student is expected to have at his fingers' ends) and could we thoroughly analyze the racial types and climatic influences of the world, we should know as much as could be known about ornament.

Ornament in its developed, or sophisticated and conscious, stage seems to me to have a close analogy to music of certain types, in which the sensuous delight in rhythm and melody, as well as the technical skill and invention of the musician, constitute the principal charm.

I imagine, however, that the pleasure a designer may feel in following out a germ of what I might call ornamental thought to its natural or logical development, and the pleasure

derived by the beholder from some harmonious or rhythmical arrangement of form and line are themselves developments from a primitive germ. It is the pleasure, or search for pleasure, of the æsthetic sense, which, from the first discovery of the fascination arising from a repeated form, or a recurring line, has been ever eager to extract from such simple elements fresh delight by greater complexity and new dispositions of the old elements, until the ornamentalist, or the student of pattern, finds himself in a vast forest of invention, complex and varied in its floral growth almost as Nature herself—an enchanted garden of decorative form, line, and colour—in which, nevertheless, the struggle for survival, or perhaps ascendancy, takes place, continually controlled by the stern schooling of necessity and utility—the gardeners with their pruning knives.

Yet I imagine, long before this conscious pleasure there was *wonder*—the wonder as of a child who gazes at the daily wonder of the sun, and covers paper with attempts at making circular forms.

Among the earliest scratchings of primitive man we get sun-symbols, we find meandering lines for water, acute points for fire, and zig-zags for lightning. These signs, too, seem at first used in a detached way, as if to convey to the mind the idea of the thing as words or signs and not with any ornamental intention.

The Egyptians, as we know, afterwards developed this kind of sign-language in their system of hieroglyphics, and in the necessity,

perhaps, of making the forms represented extremely abstract and suitable for incision, while conveying as much character as possible, they also made them ornamental. The necessity, too, of compression, ordered scale, and control of space or boundary would naturally help the decorative effect. (See illustration, p. 89.)

But apart from this consciously ordered and systematic language of hieroglyphic, we may see the sun symbols and the meanders and zig-zags forming in repetition simple borderings and types of ornament in the early art of most peoples on pottery, textiles, or carved in stone.

The sign known as the Fylfot also, originally supposed to indicate the rotation of the heavens, and having a certain mysterious significance, perhaps, to others not fully aware of its original meaning, was used as a mark or sign of good fortune, and this, too, (being capable of repetition and pleasing recurrence) in course of time became incorporated into systems of ornament. It is found widely scattered and associated with many different types, being found in the art of both eastern and western peoples, and constantly reappearing.

The Greek fret, a type of border ornament frequently associated with the foregoing, and apparently surviving by sheer logical persistence, as well, perhaps, as its perfect adaptability to simple textile conditions, may have originally had the significance attached to interlocked hands. We know that borders of joined hands or fingers are still found upon oriental copper



dishes, and in association with the margin of the dish have an obvious significance, either as the laving of hands before or after meat, or as in the sense of the text "he that dippeth with me in the dish."

Of Ornament and its Meaning

In regard to the fret, however, there is a

Greek Cylinx



Peleus and Thetis

well-known centre of a Greek cylix painted with a design representing the wrestling of Peleus and Thetis, where the interlocked hands take precisely the form, seen in profile, of the fret border which encloses the (circular) design, the unit of which may be discovered by anyone who will interlock right and left hand and note the form expressed by the overlapped fingers.

Again, as I have elsewhere pointed out, the garland or swag so dear to the heart of the classical architect and designer, was originally the festive garland of leaves and flowers hung around the house or temple, as may be seen in the beautiful Romano-Greek relief of the visit of Bacchus to Icarius in the British Museum.

There appear to me to be two sources of derivation or meaning in ornament; *the Symbolic*, which I have touched upon, and *the Constructive*.

To the latter may be traced many of the forms in use as enrichments in the various orders of classical architecture, which owe their origin to primitive wooden structures, such as the dentil, the egg and tongue, the guilloche, etc. The volute and meandering borders so frequent in Greek pottery are traceable in their main lines to the primitive structural art of wattling. While the banded patterns upon weapons in the bronze age are, like enough, reminiscences of the tying and thonging, by means of which primitive man dispensed with nails.

That universal and indispensable pattern-motive and pattern-basis, the chequer, seems obviously to have been suggested by rush plating, or primitive weaving; and the knotted and spreading strands of the primitive mat, as it lay on the ground, may have been the germ from which a whole family of border patterns was developed which come to us from the ancient Asiatic civilizations of the East; but the type reached its richest and most graceful form in the hands of

the Greeks in their anthemion or honeysuckle borderings.

Of Ornament and its  
Meaning

The anthemion itself, taken singly, as sculptured ornament or finial upon a stele, I am inclined to think had a symbolic intention, and was intended to suggest the flames of the funeral pyre. In general form it is almost identical with the gilded metal flame haloes placed behind the images of Indian and Burmese deities, and recalls also the rayed flower so universal in Persian ornament, sometimes enclosing a fruit of the pomegranate type. Here again there is symbolic intention—life and the flame of life, with its flower and fruit.

Religious symbolism has, of course, played an important part in the history of ornament, and especially enriches the ornament of the middle ages, together with heraldic symbolism, which may be said to have been almost exclusively *the* ornament of the earlier middle ages—and very splendid ornament it was. What would have been those beautiful Sicilian silks, and the splendid thirteenth and fourteenth century textiles, without those “strange beasts and birds” which form such valuable ornamental units, and must have been reassuring and comforting upon the hanging or the robe, filling the owner or the wearer with the pride of ancestry, and the spirit of his fathers, as he recognized the family totem, or the badge and motto that had served well in so many a fight.

Apart, however, from both symbolic and structural origin and meaning, an important element in ornament is *line*, and *line*, owing to

certain inseparable association of ideas according to its quality, structure, or direction, must always carry definite meaning to the eye and the mind: the association of restfulness with horizontal lines, and ornament constructed upon such lines; the suggestion of fixity and solidity by the use of horizontals with verticals; the stern and logical character given to a design in which only angular forms are used; the expression of movement by the waved or meandering line—the line actually described by human action (even by simply walking, as we may note by marking the recurring position of the head of a figure so moving along); the lines of energy and resistance by the sharp irregular zig-zag; the lines of grace and rhythmic sweetness by gently flowing and recurring curves; or the lines of vigour, of structural force, of life itself in the radiating group, or the upward spiral of aspiration.

One cannot attempt to follow out all the suggestions, in a short paper, which the thought of the meaning of ornament arouses, but it appears to me, regarded as a whole, that we have in the world of ornament a language not only of extraordinary beauty, but of deep symbolical, historical, constructive, and racial meaning, and could we follow it fully to its sources, we should probably get as complete a history of the races which have used it as a means of expression, as we could do from any other kind of human record.

To the modern designer, accustomed as he is to play with what were once words and

syllables of perhaps vital import, *meaning*, in the ornament he may be called upon to fashion, apart from its own form or technical purpose, seems, perhaps, a vain or an inessential thing. But, while by no means confusing the purpose of art with that of poetry or literature, and fully allowing that to attain beauty and fitness is as much virtue as we ought to expect of any designer of ornament, or any other artist—if it grows, as it were, naturally out of the structure and necessities of the building, or of whatever it is the final expression and flowering—I still think that there are some thoughts, some suggestions, proper to design as a language of line and form, and that an ultimate symbolical meaning, however veiled, gives an interest and a dignity to any piece of ornament, as well as a certain vitality which it could not otherwise possess.

Of Orna-  
ment and its  
Meaning



## THOUGHTS ON HOUSE-DECORATION

Thoughts on  
House-  
Decoration

HOUSE-DECORATION, it would seem, is almost synonymous with civilization, and certainly has been co-extensive with its development in the world. The domestic interior, so far as we are able to realize it, and all that it implies, affords the best visible evidence of the standard of living and refinement, and sense of beauty existing among a race or people of any age or country.

In proportion as the conditions of human life become more and more artificial, and removed from nature, man seems to require the aid of art.

Decoration, indeed, might be regarded as a sort of æsthetic compensation for the increased artificiality, complexity, and restraint of civilized life.

Sheltered from the storm in a rain-proof, well-drained house, by a comfortable fireside, the comfort of a citizen who sits at home at ease is perhaps increased by the contemplation of pictures of wild landscape, perilous coasts, and even shipwrecks, upon his drawing-room wall;

but when the sun smiles and the long days come, something of the instinct of primitive man moves him, and he wants to be off to the woods and moors, seeking nature rather than art.

Thoreau, in his delightful book, "Walden," describes his endeavours to return to nature and reduce his life to the simplest conditions; he found the woods of Walden and its denizens, and the pond with its wild fowl, and the contemplation of the changeful drama of nature quite sufficient, beyond a little rough wooden shanty, with a bed, a chair, and a writing-desk in it. The only attempt at decoration he seems to have made was when he introduced some curious stones, by way of ornament, but quickly got rid of them again, as they needed dusting and arranging. Here he seems to have reached the zero of house-decoration.

Decoración with primitive and pre-historic man may be considered chiefly personal and possible. The taste for decorative pattern was gratified upon his own skin in the form of tattoo or war-paint, or in strings of beads, feather head-dresses, and the carved handles of his weapons. Not that modern man—still less modern woman—has given up personal decoration, in fact, I suppose feathers and beads were never so much in demand, but it seems that modern painters and decorators having provided so much more elaborate and becoming backgrounds they have to be “lived up to.” One has heard of the man (in “Punch”) who was looking for a wife “to suit his furni-

ture." Well, the background is an important element of a picture, after all.

Cave-walls, though not neglected in primitive times, no doubt had rather severe limitations, regarded as fields for decoration, and until the art of constructing dwellings had been developed to a certain extent, it is obvious that mural decoration could hardly exist in any ordered form.

Tent-dwellers, like the Tartars and the Arabs, developed the mat and rug, the carpet and cover, and thus, on the textile side, made their historic contribution to an important element in modern house-decoration, as well as to certain typical forms of pattern well known to decorators; but the ancient Egyptian, with his plastered surface over the sun-baked bricks which formed the wall of his dwelling was, so far as we know, the initiator of painted mural decoration. The definite but abstract forms, the primary colours cleared by black outlines, and the resulting flat decorative effect of early Egyptian art, have set the abstract type for mural painting for all ages.

With the Egyptians, however, as with the ancients generally, the buildings most regarded for decorative purposes, owing, of course to their social and religious customs, were the temple, the palace, and the tomb. The Greeks and Romans, and the nations of mediæval Europe, broadly speaking, followed the same order, inspired by very different ideas, and under the influence of very different habits of life and climatic differences. The classic temple and the mediæval

cathedral became alike the depositories of the most beautiful decorative art. They are the great representative monuments of the art of the age and of the races that produced them, truly collective and typical.

The individual citizen under Greek, Roman, and especially Christian ideas, and the development of commerce becoming of more and more importance, we find the private house considered more and more as a field for the decorator's art, and for the expression of individual feeling and taste.

As regards walls, fresco and tempera painting appear to have been the chief and most general methods of decoration from classical times to the middle ages, and it is still to those methods we look for the higher forms of mural work.

The remains of Pompeii, disclosed from beneath their pall of volcanic ashes, have furnished a mine of examples to the mural painter, and, indeed, the influence of the Roman and Pompeian taste and methods of treatment seems to have remained almost traditional with the Italian decorator, who has never lost his skill as a workman in tempera painting, though one may not always be able to admire his taste.

Yet, in regard to such a marked and distinct type of decoration as the Pompeian, one cannot but feel that in the endeavour (which has often been made) to adapt such types of decoration to modern domestic interiors there is an uncomfortable feeling of anachronism and incongruity. The style, the fancy, the colour, the treatment,

the motives, all belong so essentially to another race, and to a different climate. To live surrounded by such imported decorations would be like masquerading in classical costume, and, indeed, to be consistent, the dwellers in a Pompeian room ought to pose in classical draperies, and endeavour to emulate an Alma-Tadema picture in the aspects of their everyday life.

Every race and every age, however, acted upon by all sorts of influences, climatic, social, economic, commercial, political, historic, evolves its own ideas of home and comfort—and appropriate decorative surroundings as a necessary part of home and comfort. These, in the long run, are the *fittest* to the circumstances and conditions, but by no means always ideally the *best*, in fact, but rarely so, being the result, as a rule, of certain compromises; but the forces which fashion our lives and characters, which determine our habits and pursuits, also determine the character of our surroundings.

The very ideas of home and comfort which one might consider more fixed and permanent—more traditional—than most human notions, seem, with the increased complexity of modern life, especially on the lines of the present development of large cities, or commercial centres, liable to change. The practice of living in flats and residential hotels must surely tend to displace or modify in the mind of the ordinary citizen the older ideas of what constitutes the completeness and organic relation proper to an independently constructed dwelling. The con-



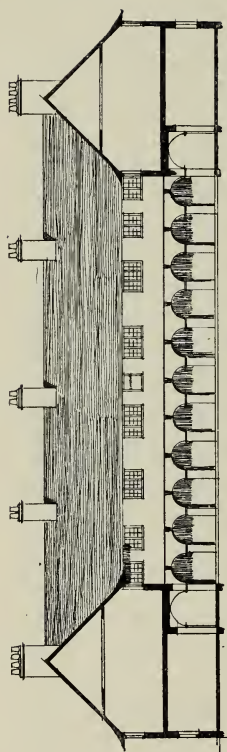
traction of space, and sometimes of light, commonly associated with flats, cannot have a favourable physical effect, and the impossibility of any garden setting—beyond a window box—must again, one would think, affect both the general health as well as a healthy sense of decoration.

The decorative designer certainly depends largely for freshness of inspiration and suggestion in design and colour upon growing plants and flowers, upon the sight of birds and animals, of the ever-changing sea and sky, and the colours of the landscape. If the sense from which is produced the very elements of decoration thus requires to be kept alive and in health, surely the sense which appreciates the product, which selects and uses, needs also similar access to nature to preserve a healthy tone. But having provided small brick boxes with slate lids as homes for our people, and packed them together in straight rows all alike on the eligible building land of our towns, we next proceed to economize space (and secure more unearned increment to the square foot) by packing such boxes one on the top of the other and calling them “mansions” or “residential flats.”

On the other hand the collective dwelling, of which perhaps we see the germ in the better type of modern flats, with a common kitchen and dining-hall, may have an important future, and there is no reason why, given favourable conditions, good sites, and ample ground and careful planning with due regard to light, air, and aspect, dwellings on the plan of collective living,

Sketch for  
Collective  
Dwelling  
containing  
Sixteen Cot-  
tages with  
Common  
Dining-hall,  
Kitchen, etc.  
 $\frac{1}{32}$ " Scale

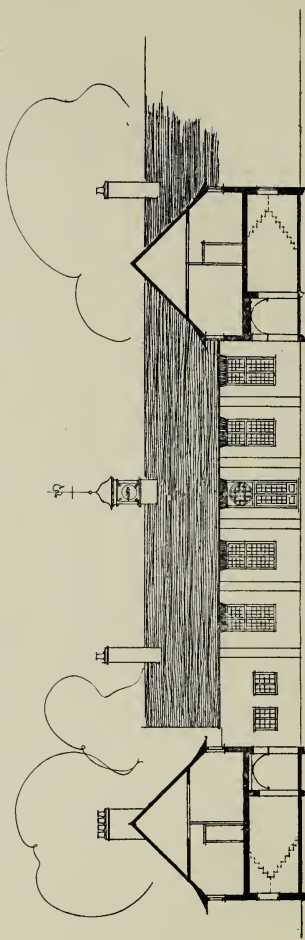
By Lionel F.  
Crane



SECTION THE DWELLING.

SECTION THE COURT YARD LOOKING TOWARDS THEIR ENTRANCE.

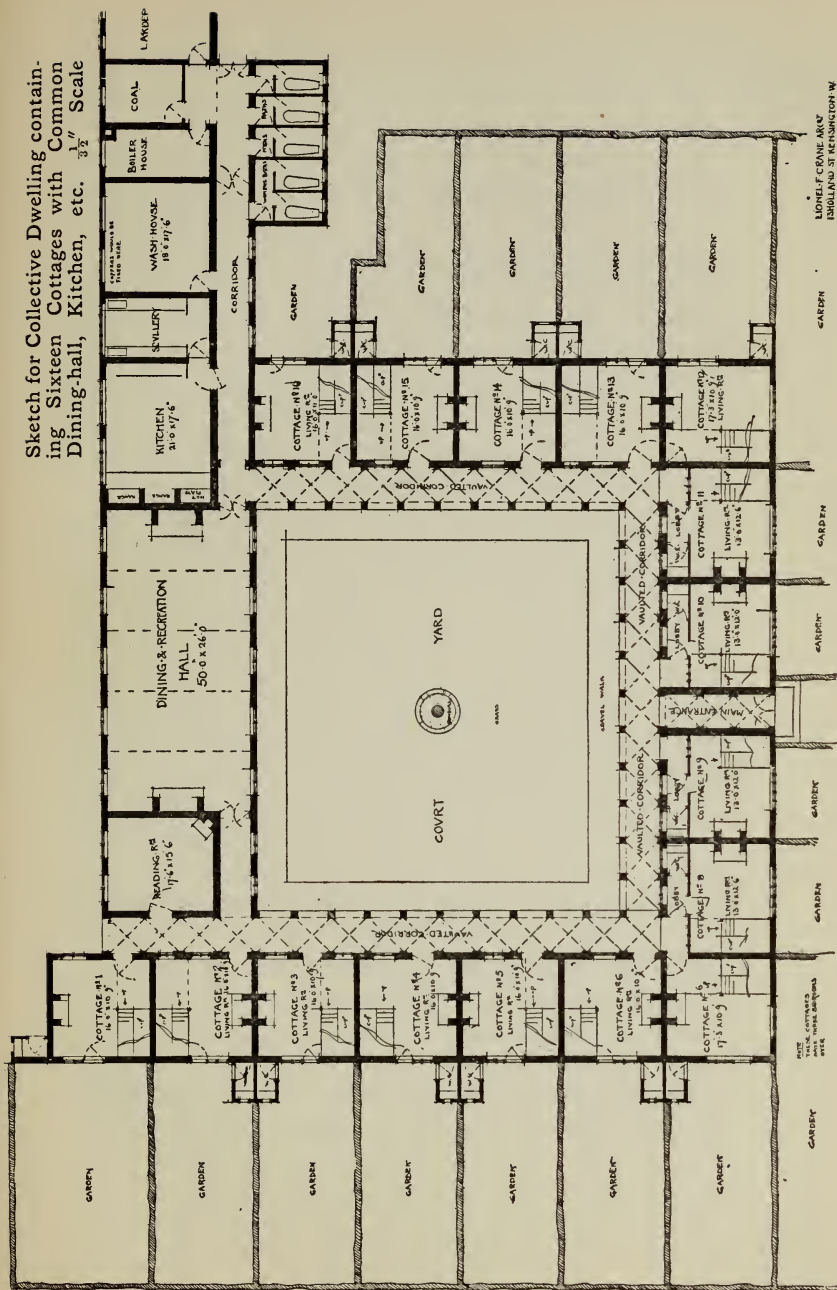
SECTION THE DWELLING.



SECTION THE COURT YARD  
SHOWING DINING HALL.

LIONEL F. CRANE ARCHT.  
BROOKLYN - ST. RUTH - 1904

Sketch for Collective Dwelling containing Sixteen Cottages with Common Dining-hall, Kitchen, etc.  $\frac{1}{32}$ " Scale





or collective homes, should not have dignity and beauty, as well as the comforts of a home combining provision for the necessity of privacy, with the social advantages of a common room, and the economic and continuous advantages of a common kitchen.

It should mean that the administration, the housework, and the cooking would be done by trained hands, and one would suppose that the load of care to devise the recurring scheme of the daily dinner, etc., now so generally pressing on the poor housewife, might thus be lifted, and a great waste of individual effort saved.

The old plan of the quadrangle would be an excellent one for a co-operative dwelling: one side of the square or wing opposite the entrance gate might be occupied by the dining-hall and public rooms, the other sides might contain the private rooms or be divided into separate dwellings with separate private entrances on the outer sides: on the inner side connected by a cloister which would enable the occupants of the private rooms or separate dwellings to pass to the public rooms at the head of the quad. A formal garden might occupy the centre of the quadrangle with a fountain in the centre. Such a scheme has, I believe, already been proposed to be tried in one of the London suburbs.

From the decorator's point of view the plan and scale of such collective dwellings might afford fine scope for art: the large public rooms such as the hall and the common dining-room, might be simple and dignified with panelled walls, leaving space above for a continuous



Frescoes by  
Ford Madox  
Brown



Town Hall,  
Manchester



Frescoes by  
Ford Madox  
Brown



Town Hall,  
Manchester

frieze of figures, or divided into separate subjects illustrating local history or legend, poetry, romance, or symbolism of life and nature.

The true place, however, for the decorative perpetuation of local history and legend is the Town Hall, and it is satisfactory to know that this principle has been thoroughly recognized in at least one important city of England and in a modern Town Hall. I allude to the frescoes of Ford Madox Brown which vividly and dramatically illustrate the history of Manchester and her worthies, and appropriately decorate the walls of the City Hall.

In Birmingham, also, I believe a scheme of painted panels has been devised to illustrate local history, and students of the Municipal School of Art have competed for the design of these. This seems an excellent idea which might be generally adopted. Every town which has municipal buildings and a municipal school of art might do much not only to stimulate public spirit and local feeling, but also materially to help young students and designers by giving them an opportunity of doing public work and thus getting practice in the highest kind of decorative art—mural painting.

Surely if we have any pride of place, if we regard our towns and cities as something more than mere mills for money-making we must feel how greatly their interest and beauty might be added to in such ways as these, as well as public parks and gardens, fountains, trees along the streets, and seats and shelters. Indeed, having regard to the future of our race, and the import-

ance of space and open air and surroundings of some beauty to the healthy growth and upraising of children, it becomes a public question of pressing importance, this of the conditions of life in our cities, housing, and house and school building and decoration.

One remarkable demonstration or object lesson has been given, owing to the initiative energy and philanthropy of Mr. George Cadbury at Bournville near Birmingham, which I was afforded the opportunity of seeing the other day. He has proved, at least (even as William Morris did), that factory work may be carried on amid pleasant surroundings and means of recreation for body and mind, and that a working population can be housed in close proximity to their work in picturesque and cheap healthy dwellings, surrounded with ample gardens and pleasant trees.

The Garden City Association is also in the field with Mr. Ebenezer Howard's scheme for uniting agriculture, horticulture and manufactures, with beautiful and healthy dwellings in garden cities which will, it is hoped, relieve the overcrowding of our great towns, and bring back the people to the country with all the conveniences and advantages of well-organized city life, and moreover enable the inhabitants to become the collective owners thereof.

The rapid means of escape from towns which modern invention and commercial interest and enterprise have placed within reach of the town dweller—while they suggest that modern cities are not meant to dwell in—by those who can



get out of them—may to some extent counteract the ill effects of an artificial existence, at least among some classes of the population, but I think a certain restlessness is induced which has its effects—even upon decorative art. The modern mind seems more easily fatigued, and to require more constant and rapid change. This restlessness, no doubt accelerated by the effects of grime and smoke, leads to the desire for more frequent change of colour and pattern in the living rooms, than formerly. This, it may be said, is healthy, because it is “good for trade”—for the painters’ and decorators’ trade, that is. One of the drawbacks of modern life, however, is the existence of trade organizations that are prepared to supply (on the shortest notice) any atrocity which may be in demand—indeed, I am not sure that supply does not in some cases create demand, and I suppose he is but a poor salesman who cannot persuade people to buy what they do not want—it may be some passing whim or phase of public taste, or want of taste; but the circumstances which are good for such trade cannot be expected to evoke much *artistic* enthusiasm. What is “good for trade” is not always good for human beings, either in the making or the using, of which we have often had evidence, but trade, or profit, is the modern fetish to which, apparently, all other considerations are expected to bow.

Now, I take it, a painter or a decorator must be primarily concerned with producing something of beauty, even if, owing to circumstances over which he has no control, it cannot be “a





View in  
Bournville



Cottages at  
Bournville

Designed by  
Alex. W.  
Harvey

joy for ever." Let his problem be of the simplest—the choice of a flat tint for a wall, for instance—the important element of individual taste comes in. This, again, must be checked by considerations of adaptability and utility, such as aspect and conditions of lighting in the room, the kind of room, its proportions and purpose.

We all know what a different effect the same tint has in full or in half-light, in sunlight or in shadow, and what transformations are effected in rooms by simply changing the tint or the wall-paper.

The effect, too, of the same tint upon different surfaces should be noted. Any texture or granulation of surface improves the quality of a flat tint, and for this reason wall coverings with a texture in them; such as are known under the name of Burlaps, are excellent, providing a variety of plain tints of pleasant texture for wall coverings, or admirable grounds for the decorator to work upon.

A good sense of colour, therefore, is of the first importance. A knowledge of how to produce certain tints; the effect of one tint upon, or in juxtaposition to, another; the effect of one tint and of different tints in the same light; the best grounds for different tints; all these things, in addition to the workman's skill of hand in laying on paint evenly, are essential parts of a painter's and decorator's training and equipment.

The complex elements out of which have been evolved our ideas of harmonious decora-

tion are not more complex than those out of which the varieties of the modern house have been produced. True taste, as well as common sense, would say, "cut your coat according to your cloth"—build your house and decorate it according to what you can spend upon it: let it represent your own ideas of taste and comfort, after due thought, and not be an imitation of another's, or of something in the mode which you think you ought to like, neither something costly because of the cost, or a cheap imitation of something costly.

How few houses seem to be built or decorated upon these principles. How few, indeed, build their houses at all, or have much choice in the matter—except perhaps that of Hobson, who must also have been a jerry builder.

There is an old saying that fools build houses and wise men live in them. However that may be, certainly town-dwellers are often like hermit-crabs, glad to creep into more or less inconvenient empty shells erected by former generations, happy if they succeed in adapting them to their own requirements more or less. In a book on architecture of about the date 1836, elevations and plans are given of "a First-rate House," "a Second-rate House," "a Third-rate House," and even "a Fourth-rate"—quite on the principle of railway carriages, but going one better, or one worse. They all present modest street frontages of about twenty feet, duly cemented and painted. They differ chiefly in the number of their stories, and consequently windows, but the plans and elevations are all

of the same type, slightly varied in the details. The "first-rate" house, though a little more ornate and classic in some ways is by no means a palace, and the fourth-rate house is not exactly a cottage; the second-rate is only a cheaper edition of the first-rate, and the third-rate tries to look like the second-rate, but is conscious of having only one window to the dining-room. All sport balconies to the first-floor front windows and iron railings, guarding the ground-floor and basement, only the fourth-rate has no basement. It is as if the architect started with one elevation and literally cut it down to meet the exigencies of second, third, and fourth-rate tenants—I had almost said passengers—and in strict accordance with the then building acts.

Those building acts, perhaps, are responsible for the monotony of our modern streets. Although they have in some respects been modified of late, houses in a street or road are obliged to dress up to a straight building line, toeing the mark like a file of soldiers. Or, perhaps, more suggestive of a train of railway carriages, which only needs a locomotive attached to the end of the row to pull them along, and one might hope, out of sight, also. There are miles of houses of this type still existing in our towns, notably London, for which in fact the designs I speak of were intended, but I have seen their like in Liverpool, Dublin, and elsewhere.

Though carefully graded in classes and adjusted to certain rentals, the aim of the builder has been to make each present, on the outside, an equally neat and respectable appearance.

This is thoroughly characteristic of mid-nineteenth century ideas, and the love of neatness has always been characteristic of the English. The compromise, also, between modest requirements, or shall we say, between 5 per cent. and a respect for the Five Orders, which the street frontages of this period exhibit, is equally characteristic. We see the last results of the wave of Greco-Roman taste which ruled from the end of the eighteenth century to the early Victorian time. Of course we have got beyond all that now, though the type remains, and in some cases even, with its remnants of style, affords a slight relief and sense of repose after certain flamboyant erections in terra-cotta and plate glass which have appeared in our streets, with the up-to-date builders.

The type, as I have said, of these middle-class dwellings remains, their chief charm as well as decorative point being in the design of the street doorway, with classical columns or pilasters and a fanlight often with a graceful design in leaded glazing, too often ruthlessly scooped out to make way for blank plate glass. We know those iron railings (protecting the area and kitchen quarters from the attacks of the soldier and policeman), the windows of the basement timidly peeping above the ground as with half-closed eyes; the steps to the front door whitened by successive generations of devoted housemaids; the more or less Doric front door; the entrance hall, or long squeezey passage with the umbrella stand as a principal decoration; the staircase at the end leading to the upper



rooms; the dining-room opening out of the aforesaid passage, with perhaps a dismal window in the rear, commanding a fine prospect of back yards, unless considerately veiled by ferns, or stopped out by some would-be stained glass. The bedrooms over, back and front, follow naturally from such an obvious plan.

Such types of houses, however out of date, ought not to be without interest to the house-painter and decorator, since they depend for keeping up appearances almost entirely upon fresh paint—and nothing is, as we know, “as fresh as paint.” Indeed, I have often noticed in London—from that commanding eminence the top of a’bus—how the white-painted old-fashioned fronts with green doors of some of the houses in Piccadilly, facing the Green Park, donning new “coats” for the season, quite put to shame some of their neighbours—the gorgeous stone-built and marble-columned club façades with all the grime of a London winter thick upon them.

There is nothing like leather—I mean paint—after all! In fact, whether inside or outside, the town house requires constantly cheering up by the painter and decorator, but it must be the decoration that cheers but not inebriates—and there is a good deal of what I should call inebriated decoration about. Much of what is generally known as “l’Art nouveau,” for instance, belongs to this category—the wild and whirling squirms which form the chief ornamental unit, whether in surface decoration, furniture construction, wood carving, inlays, or

textiles—which was so much in evidence at the late Paris Exhibition, and in the pages of “The Studio,” which is, moreover, generally on the continent considered to be English in its origin. In some of its forms it certainly does suggest a free translation into French or German of a kind of decorative art associated with the designers of the Glasgow school, but, no doubt, like all modern and mixed styles (like the melancholy of Jacques in “As you like it), it is extracted from many simples and compounded of many elements. It is said that the Emperor Augustus found Rome of brick and he left it a city of marble. I should, contrariwise, suggest that our decorator, supposing he found the woodwork of “a desirable residence” *grained*, should leave it *plain-painting*—beginning at the front door. Iron railings, it may be noted, in passing, are generally painted (perhaps from economic reasons) too dark a colour, which darkens still more in the smoke of towns. A favourite hue is a kind of beefy red, sometimes picked out with gilding, though this artistic touch is generally reserved for public buildings—or the public house. Graceful wrought ironwork of a light kind often looks well painted white or a light cool green, but ordinary Brunswick-green (of a middle tint) has a good appearance with the white window frames, reveals and door jambs of a red-brick house, the green being repeated for the front door and any outside shutters. Apropos of the heavy red paint so frequently used for ironwork, I think that the cylinders of gas-works (which form such

important items in the scenery of our suburbs) would be far less trying objects if they were painted a discreet and retiring cool tint of green, and the light iron work supporting standards or columns painted white. I do not think such a treatment ought to raise the price of gas, but it would certainly elevate (or shall we say mitigate) the gasometer, and it would certainly dispel the irresistible impression on the mind of the unprejudiced that these rotundas were really huge rounds of pressed beef waiting for some giant Cormoran's luncheon.

But we stopped at a green door, with white jambs. Dear to some decorator-painters' hearts (and hands) is "graining." Wonderful, and sometimes fearful are its results. I quite recognize the skill sometimes spent upon graining—the extraordinary imitation of costly natural woods which a skilled grainer can produce over ordinary painted deal. There are also motives of economy, I believe, to account for the persistence of graining—in an age of such transparent honesty and simple habits as ours (?). The practice, I have heard, commends itself in some quarters for the same reason that influenced Dame Primrose in the choice of her wedding gown, namely, "for qualities that wear well."

Nothing can be a more delightful, or a more durable lining for the walls of hall or living-room than oak panelling, but nothing, to my mind, can be more sordid and unpleasant than the woodwork of a room grained to imitate oak.

The one field where skill in graining and marbling would be appropriate is that of stage



Interior,  
1a, Holland  
Park.  
Designed by  
Philip Webb

From a  
Photograph  
by W. E.  
Gray

scenery and decoration, where the object is to imitate, and where the scene has to be quickly changed in obedience to the demands of the drama.

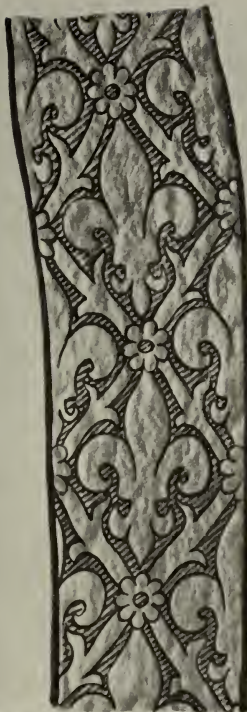
Few interiors are more pleasant than the white-painted panelled rooms in eighteenth-century houses, a mode which some modern architects have revived with much success. There is nothing like white paint for the wood-work of modern rooms. It is the best set-off to wall-papers, and though many attempts have been made by house painters and decorators to get variety of effect by repeating in the styles and panels of the doors some leading tint of the wall-paper, the eye soon tires of the rather restless result, and welcomes plain white flatted paint, leaving it to the mouldings to give the necessary relief.

Door panels are often considered suitable fields for painted or other decoration; if, however, door panels are emphasized in this way, the walls would have to be quiet in pattern and colour, so as to let the doors tell as the chief decorative points; in such a scheme they would naturally be balanced by a painted treatment of a wood mantelpiece and connected by a chair rail and panelled dado, or wainscot; on the other hand, with a richly patterned and coloured wall the wood-work, if painted, should be kept plain colour.

If our technical schools where house-painting is taught, instead of devoting time and skill to teaching methods of imitative graining, were to endeavour to train the pupils to use the

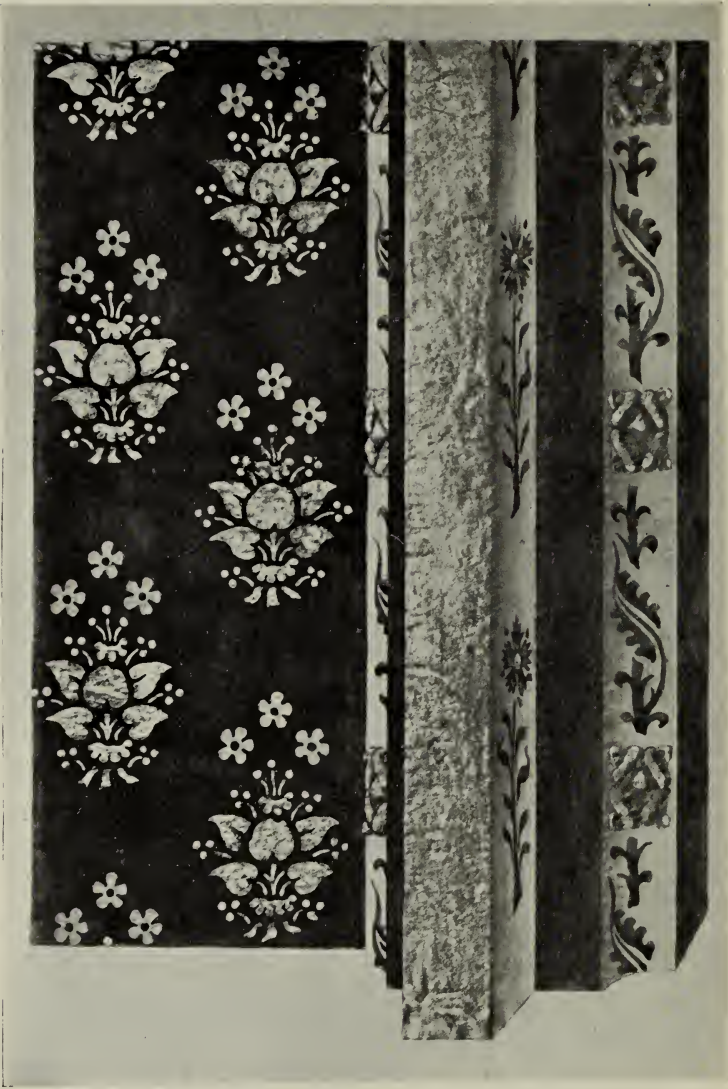


Painted  
Decoration,  
Ranworth  
Rood  
Screen,  
Norfolk



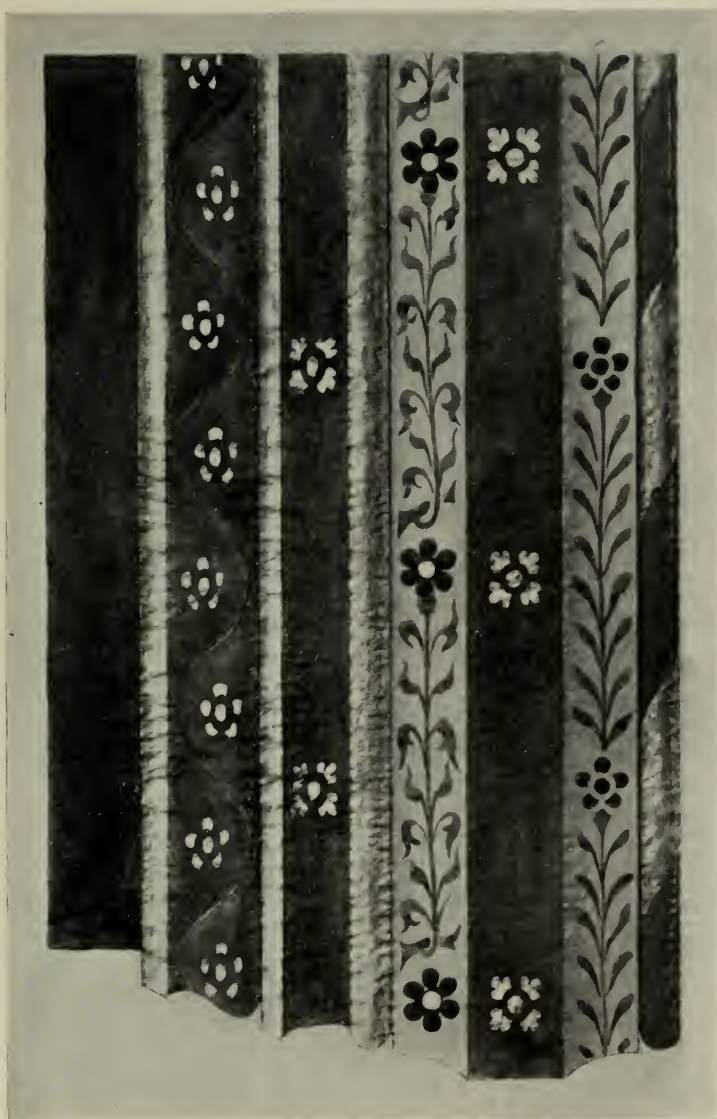
Drawn by  
W. T.  
Cleobury

Painted  
Decoration,  
Ranworth  
Rood  
Screen,  
Norfolk



Drawn by  
W. T.  
Cleobury

Painted  
Decoration,  
Ranworth  
Rood  
Screen,  
Norfolk



Drawn by  
W. T.  
Cleobury

brush as decorators and encourage them to design and paint simple ornamental borders, fillings, and friezes, such as might be useful in interior decoration, and train them to be able to space out walls with simple but tasteful sprays of leaves and flowers, decoratively treated, and painted by direct clean brush touches, we should surely see better results. Following the spirit of such types as these from the Ranworth screen in Norfolk, for instance (a beautiful piece of mediaeval English work of the fifteenth century, drawn for me by Mr. Cleobury, who has also furnished the South Kensington Museum with a complete set of drawings from the screen), they would be doing much more excellent as well as interesting work, work which in its practical results ought to prove much more pleasant and useful, both to house-painters and to house-holders. This might be supported by prizes being offered for such work in public exhibitions.

The attention now being given in primary schools to brush-work, if wisely directed in its effects, by giving facility to young hands in the use of the brush, with its power of expressing form by direct strokes, ought to be an excellent aid and preparation for such an after training in practical painting and decorating as is here suggested.

Stencilling and the design of stencils (which affords excellent practice in pattern construction of all kinds to the designer and decorator), has been developed of late years to rather a remarkable degree by our art schools, as the National



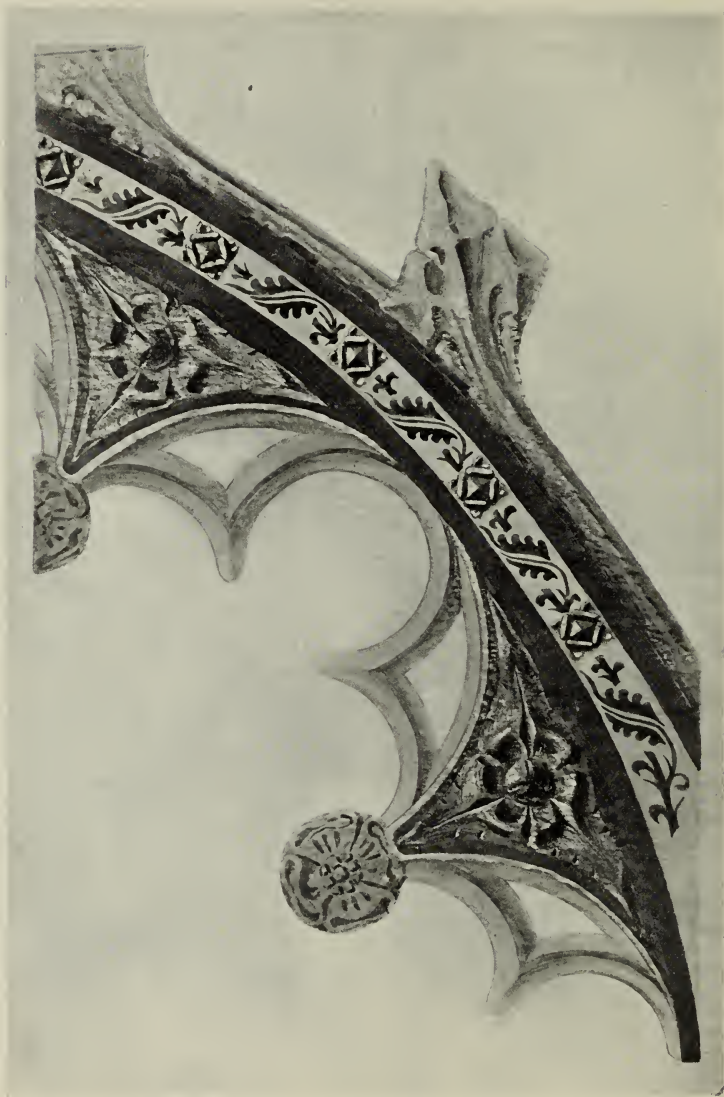
Painted  
Decoration,  
Ranworth  
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Screen,  
Norfolk



Drawn by  
W. T.  
Cleobury



Painted  
Decoration,  
Ranworth  
Rood  
Screen,  
Norfolk



Drawn by  
W. T.  
Cleobury

competitions bear witness. There has been a tendency to over-elaborate this kind of decora-

Thoughts on  
House-  
Decoration



Painted  
Decoration,  
Ranworth  
Rood  
Screen,  
Norfolk

Drawn by  
W. T.  
Cleobury

tion, however, by complex patterns and the use of blended tints, which its conditions hardly

bear. Though a useful and cheap and effective method of decorating large wall spaces, friezes, and even temporary hangings, and for temporary decoration generally, it seems to have its natural limits, and is hardly fitted for positions near the eye. But I have seen it effectively used in the large rooms and rough plastered walls of an Italian villa, associated with bold hanging brocade patterns of a Gothic type.

In deciding on a scheme for the decoration of one's house, one must consider what are to be the chief decorative points, and endeavour to lead up to them. The choice of wall-papers, for instance, would naturally be influenced by various considerations. There is first the purpose and use of the room—dining, drawing-room, library, living-room or bed-room, or what not—there is its aspect and amount of lighting. If the question be the colouring of a whole house, a reasonable scheme would be to be comparatively simple and sparing of colour and ornament in the passages, staircase, and less important rooms, but with some connecting link of colour lead on to the important rooms, which might be much richer, and vary much from each other. At the same time it is not pleasant to jump suddenly from warm to cool tones, and a house or suite of rooms might be reasonably planned in either a warm or a cool key according to its character, situation, and lighting. Much, too, would depend upon the type of furniture, since house construction, decoration, and furniture, are properly all closely related.

Painted  
Decoration,  
Ranworth  
Rood  
Screen,  
Norfolk



Drawn by  
W. T.  
Cleobury



There is the question of pictures. It should never be a struggle for ascendancy between the wall-paper and the pictures. Pictures may be considered as central points in the decorative scheme of a room and the colour and pattern of the main field of the wall arranged and carefully harmonized to suit them. The choice of tint must depend upon the tone and colour of the pictures to some extent, though usually a gray-green or subdued red forms a suitable background, or plain brown paper, which is a very safe one. A white wall, however, has more distinction, and pictures in gold or black frames look remarkably well upon white. One often sees old pictures hanging on white walls in old country houses, and they always have a fine and dignified effect. The little Dutch interior by Van der Meer in the National Gallery, besides being a little gem of painting, shows how beautiful a thing is a white wall, and how suitable for pictures and becoming to persons. One gets a more luminous effect in a white interior, and in our towns, where there is none too much light, it is a good thing to get rid of gloomy corners.

Two other charming interiors, each distinct and characteristic of different races, country, and climate, may be studied in the background of Van Dyck's wonderful portrait picture of Jan Arnolfini and his wife, a Flemish interior of the fifteenth century, and again in the delightful house of the Virgin in Carlo Crivelli's "Annunciation," with all its wealth of decorative detail, which gives one an excellent idea of a well-ap-



Painted  
Decoration,  
Ranworth  
Rood  
Screen,  
Norfolk



Drawn by  
W. T.  
Cleobury

pointed Venetian citizen's house of the fifteenth century. Both of these are well-known gems of our National Gallery.

Illustrations of these pictures are given in my book on "Line and Form," so that instead of repeating them here I give one from Lucas van Leyden's "Annunciation" at Munich (Pinacothek) which shows a charming Gothic interior with a wagon-vaulted roof, wheel window, and a rich brocade hanging to the bed, with other interesting details.

Another delightful example is the early renaissance Venetian interior which forms the background of Carpaccio's "Dream of St. Ursula" (L'Accademia, Venice).

For photographs or prints a pale yellow wall looks well—a pale lemon or primrose tint—it lights up softly and agreeably at night. Pale yellow may also be recommended for a rather dark room. Even one fleck of sunlight on a pale yellow wall has a marvellous reflecting power and will illuminate the whole room. One can agreeably complete the harmony with brown, or black and white, with a touch of orange in the furniture and texture.

As a rule, in modern drawing-rooms and living-rooms, there are too many colours, as well as too much furniture. The proportions of the architect and the scheme of the decorator hardly have a chance.

"Elizabeth in her German Garden" speaks of the charm of rooms newly distempered and papered, with no furniture in them; but though it might make a paper-hanger happy, I fear



Flemish  
Fifteenth-  
Century  
Interior

Lucas van  
Leyden,  
"The An-  
nunciation,"  
Munich,  
Pinacothek

this would be too severe for ordinary English taste.

I remember a gentleman at Los Angeles, California, showing me with pride a room in his villa he had papered with a gorgeous wall-paper with lots of gold in it. He considered it sufficient in itself, an end and not a means, and apparently had no intention of disturbing or obscuring the design by pictures or furniture, except perhaps a chair or a couch from which to contemplate the splendours of the pattern.

I think there is a good deal to be said for the adoption of the Eastern idea of a divan for western salons—seats all round the room and in the windows, with small moveable coffee-tables. Ladies who entertain would find this a very convenient arrangement for “at home” days, and with a parquet floor the young people would only have to roll up the rugs to find dancing room at short notice. The hall, or house place of old English houses, no doubt easily lent itself to hospitable and social gatherings, the long tables and benches ranged along the walls leaving plenty of floor space for games or dancing, while the ingle-nook invited the gossips and story-tellers.

The revival of the hall or living-room with the ingle-nook is a noteworthy feature in recent country houses. In fact, in the design and construction of the small country houses or country cottages built of late years, mostly as retreats for workers in towns, artists and others, we find the most successful, attractive, and characteristic buildings of our time, probably. The cot-



tages designed by Mr. C. F. A. Voysey, for instance, with rough-cast battened and buttressed walls, green or Whitland Abbey slates,

Thoughts on  
House-  
Decoration



Carpaccio's  
"The Dream  
of St.  
Ursula,"  
Accademia,  
Venice

From a  
Photograph  
by Anderson

green outside shutters, and white casements, have the charm of neatness, quaintness, and simplicity, an utter absence of pretentiousness and show, and a regard for the character of their site. There are some charming cottages of this



type at Bournville, already referred to, designed by Mr. Harvey, the young architect of the estate. I give one here of my son's (Mr. Lionel Francis Crane) design—a timber cottage in the recent "Cottages Exhibition" at Garden City. In designing a country house, an architect is of course much less fettered than with a town or street site, and he can frame it in a garden, which is an important decorative adjunct or setting to a country house or cottage. It is possible also to make it fit into or even become a part of the scenery, especially if local materials are employed. Indeed, it seems to me, that the secret of harmonious effect in building lies in the use of local materials as regards country houses. The beauty of our old castles, abbeys, country houses and cottages is greatly owing to this. We feel they are in harmony with the character and colour of the scenery, and have become parts of these, independently of the effects of time.

In the present awakening of the public mind to the importance of the housing question, and the want of substantial, comfortable, as well as comely dwellings for the people, especially in the country districts, much attention has been directed to cottage building, and a practical effort is being made by the Garden City Association to solve the question in the competitive exhibition in cottage design and building they recently organized. The question is, as usual, complicated by the commercial question of profit and percentages on invested capital.

Were the object solely the national welfare,

Cottage in  
the Garden  
City, Letch-  
worth, Herts



Architect,  
Lionel F.  
Crane.  
Builder,  
Frank New-  
ton, Hitchin

Interior of  
Cottage at  
Letchworth



Architect,  
Lionel F.  
Crane. The  
Furniture by  
A. Heal  
(Messrs.  
Heal and  
Son)

Interior of  
Cottage at  
Letchworth



Architect,  
Lionel F.  
Crane. The  
Furniture by  
A. Heal  
(Messrs.  
Heal and  
Son)



as it should be, cottages could be designed and built good to live in and seemly to look at. Objections have been made to the local bye-laws, but so far as I am aware these bye-laws are only intended to secure the minimum conditions necessary to health and comfort, and would in no way interfere with the erection of well-built and sightly cottages. Thatch, it is true, is I believe, in some counties forbidden on account of danger from fire (probably really increased by the use of low-flash oil in cheap lamps), but for detached cottages with the use of iron laths and reed thatch (as Mr. Robert Williams has pointed out) such danger is reduced to a minimum, and certainly there are thatched cottages and barns, and even churches, in England which have lasted hundreds of years, and thatch, after all, makes an excellent roof, cool in summer and warm in winter, and pleasant to look upon.

How charming a cottage can be made, how picturesque and pleasing though quite new, how perfectly in keeping with its surroundings and fitted to its site, I lately had an opportunity of seeing in the neighbourhood of Leicester. I allude to a certain cottage designed by Mr. Ernest Gimson. The interior also was an illustration of how decorative rooms could look with hardly any decoration. This is a hard saying for decorators, but my impression was that whitewashed walls, plain oaken furniture, only relieved by William Morris's printed cotton in the shape of window curtains or loose cushions here and there, were sufficiently decorative con-



Stoneywell  
Cottage,  
Exterior



Ernest W.  
Gimson,  
Architect

sidering the designs and conditions of the structure of the house. With glimpses of the wild hill-side and the beautiful woodland landscape beyond them seen through the deep-set windows, there seemed no need for landscapes on the walls—bad news for poor frozen-out picture-painters again!

The reign of the big plate-glass window, I believe, is over, and certainly in such a climate as ours one needs as a rule to be assured one is really indoors. Certainly, nothing makes so much difference to the aspect and comfort of a room or house as the position and size of the windows. I have a preference for casements with plain-leading, and if the window is high, stained glass may find an appropriate place above the transoms, or in windows where veiled light is needed, or plain roundels where a view from within or without is not desired.

There is no doubt a determined effort in the direction of a return to simplicity, both in house designing, furniture, and decorations on the part of the more refined and cultured, as a reaction perhaps against the ostentation and luxury of the appointments of the extremely and newly rich, and the pretentiousness of the decorations of monster hotels, where coarse imitations of decadent periods of French art do duty for splendour, though even here of late the simpler taste has asserted itself. There is indeed some danger that oak or green-stained furniture and whitewashed walls may come to be considered as outward and visible signs of an inward and



Stoneywell  
Cottage,  
Interior of  
Living-room

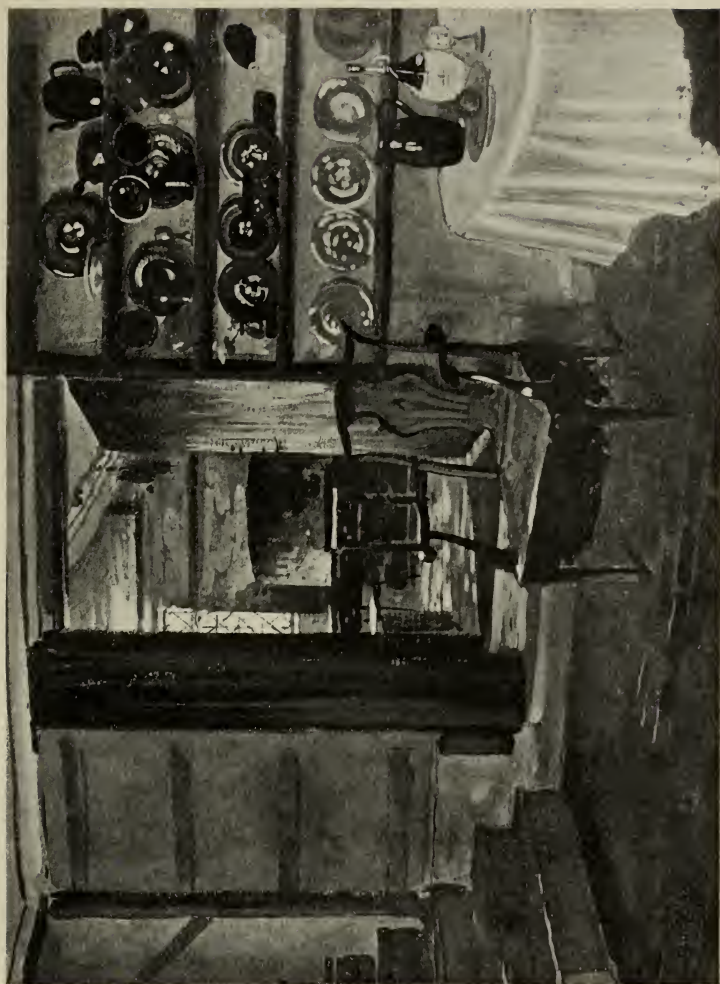
Furniture  
Designed by  
Ernest W.  
Gimson,  
Sidney H.  
Barnsley,  
and Ernest  
A. Barnsley

spiritual grace, when perhaps they are only the fashion.

“Have nothing in your house but what you believe to be beautiful or what you know is useful,” was the straightforward advice of that great conservative revolutionist in English decorative art and other things—William Morris—and he certainly acted up to it in his own house.

As to the useful, there are no complications about that. A room with a definite purpose has character, and is always more or less picturesque. The kitchen is generally the most picturesque room in the house, yet usually entirely devoid of what may be called decoration. Its objects of art are merely the tools of the workshop, the bright brass and copper vessels, the dish-covers gleaming like polished armour from the white walls. The rows of blue and white plates and dishes upon the dresser, and all the simple but sufficient hand tools of the cook's office about, easily make up an attractive Dutch picture.

The real aesthetic dangers come in to the rooms which have no visible means of subsistence, so to speak. The dining-room, perhaps for this reason, is more successful generally than the drawing-room, and there exists a sort of tradition that it should be warm and rich in colour. Silver plate often gleams pleasantly from the sideboard, and the furniture is simple and massive in its lines. An old English dining-room, with Chippendale or Sheraton furniture, has a character and distinction of its own. A library, again, is almost sure to look a habitable



Old English  
Farmhouse  
Interior  
(Kent)

From a  
Sketch by  
Walter  
Crane



room, and there are few more agreeable linings to walls than books, and here we must depend upon the taste of the binders, as well as on the furniture provided for the mind. There would, however, be room for the professional decorator upon the ceiling, and I mind me of the lovely plaster ceilings to be met with in sixteenth-century houses, sometimes armorial, sometimes emblematic—such as those at Knoles and Blickling. In plaster work we have a beautiful and permanent kind of decoration which we owe to Italy, but which seems to have become quite domesticated here, and to have developed its own forms with us. The plain white, flat ceiling of the ordinary modern dwelling-house is the last relic, and even this used to have a big plaster rose screwed up in the middle, from which sprouted the gaselier; but one need not regret the departure of both excrescences in favour of the clean and pendulous shaded electric light, with light and simple brass or copper fittings. Our plasterers, however, might be able to throw some delicate ribs or pleasant spacing of simple sprays and devices upon the inviting plain of white plaster over our heads, or, if not, why not let the joists show and paint or stencil them with running leaf patterns, or paint them black, leaving white plaster between? Mr. George Walton, one of the most tasteful and original decorators in the newer mode, and under the Glasgow influence, showed a new treatment of a ceiling in glass and metal, together with a completely decorated and fitted interior at the recent Glasgow Exhibition. A plaster ceiling demands a frieze,

and both may be effective either plain or coloured. This would depend upon whether a light, dark, or rich effect were required in the room. There is much charm in the coloured treatment of plaster, especially of figure designs in low relief as in the work of Mr. Anning Bell,

Thoughts on  
House-  
Decoration



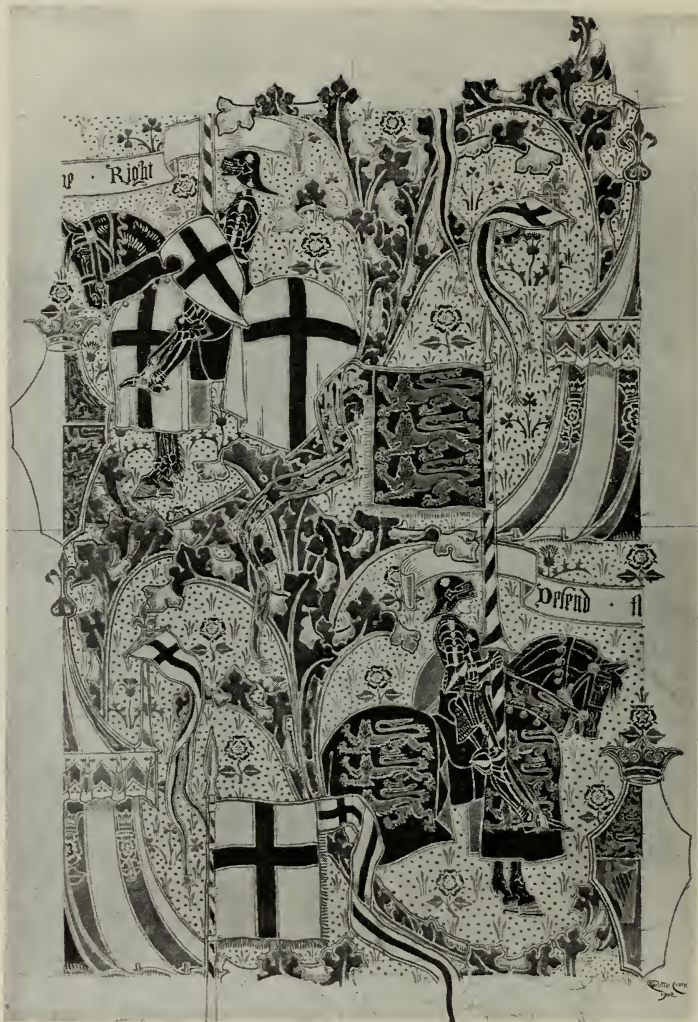
Combe Bank,  
Sevenoaks,  
the Saloon

The Stamped  
Leather,  
Plaster Ceil-  
ing, Chimney  
Breast, smaller  
Frieze  
Panels, and  
Door Panels  
Designed,  
Modelled,  
and Painted  
by Walter  
Crane

Mr. Pomeroy, and Mr. Gerald Moira, though these require large rooms, public halls, or churches.

I have designed decorations (ceilings and friezes) in plaster and in stucco, and gesso worked *in situ*. These, in several instances, were gilded or silvered and lacquered so as to pro-

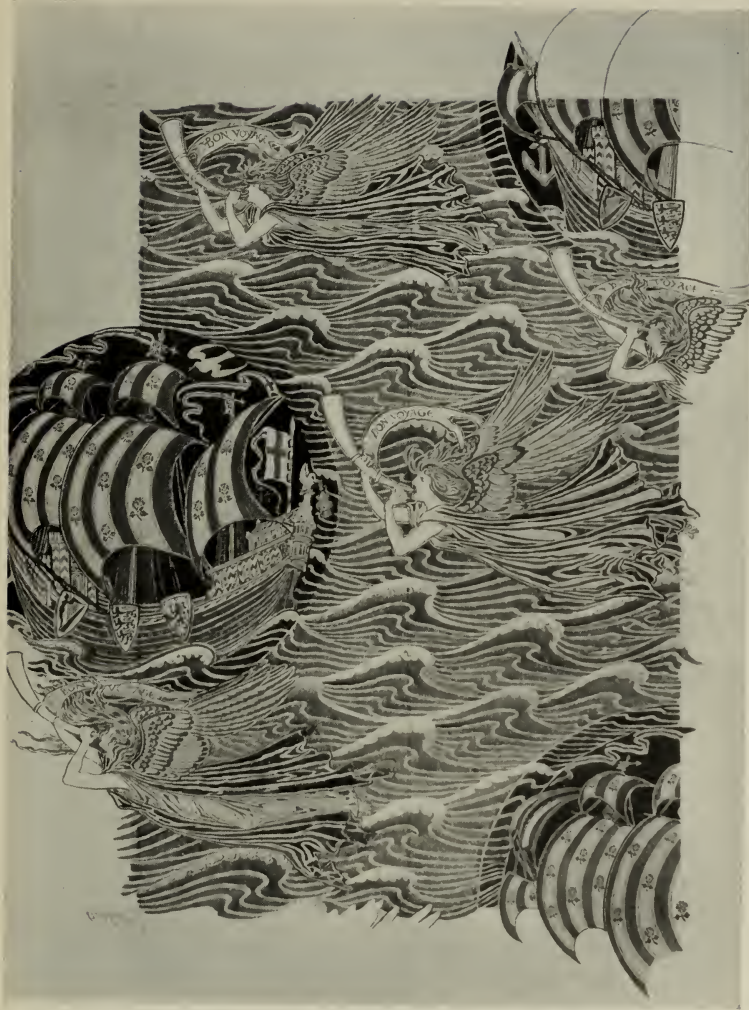
Printed  
Cretonne  
Hanging,  
"Defend the  
Right"



Designed by  
Walter Crane



Printed  
Cretonne  
Hanging,  
"Bon  
Voyage"



Designed by  
Walter Crane

duce a low-toned metallic effect. This ornament harmonizes with richly coloured and rather dark-toned walls hung with silk or Spanish leather; but these were by no means cottage interiors.

For a cottage or small country house, printed cretonne, used as hangings for the lower walls of a room, has an attractive effect if suitable in pattern and colour, having a fresh, clean, and even gay effect with white woodwork and furniture.

The most comfortable, and at the same time the most romantic, also, I fear it must be added, the most expensive, way of decorating walls is by hanging them with arras tapestry such as that produced by William Morris. The dining-room of the English House at the last Paris Universal Exhibition was panelled in oak up to about six or eight feet, and the space above to the cornice was hung with Morris arras tapestry, designed by Burne-Jones and himself, showing the legend of King Arthur's knights and the Holy Grail. The simplicity, yet richness and dignity of effect has a striking contrast to the more clamorous decorations of some of its neighbours, among which, however, the Spanish Pavilion was an exception.

Complete schemes for wall decorations (including field, frieze, dado, and ceiling), can, however, be had in wall-paper, which, with plain painting for the modest citizen, remains the chief method of interior mural decoration. A frieze usually heightens and lightens the effect of a room, and its junction with the field





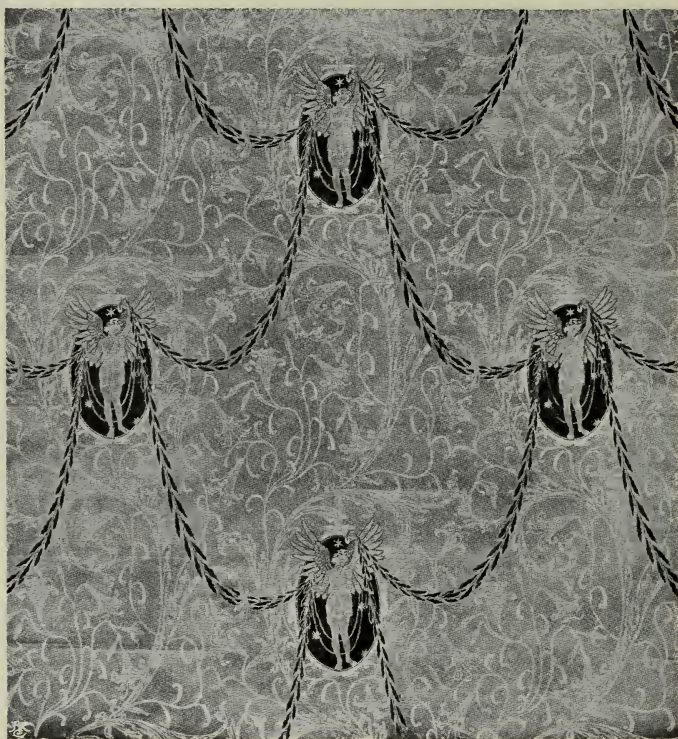
Wall-paper,  
"Lily"

Designed by  
Walter Crane

Thoughts on  
House-  
Decoration

Wall-paper,  
"Dawn"

can be utilized for a picture-rail, the wall space from the picture-rail to the skirting being covered with rich or quiet pattern, as the particular scheme may demand. Sometimes a



Designed by  
Walter Crane

patterned frieze does well above a plain tinted wall.

I venture here to give some illustrations of some of my recent wall-paper designs, by permission of the makers, Messrs. Jeffery and Co.



Wall-paper,  
Lion Frieze  
and Rose  
Bush Filling

Designed by  
Walter Crane



The blue and white lily pattern (single prints) would be suitable where a bold effect was desired for a dado or field of lower wall with plain white, or a quiet frieze above. It might be useful in halls and passages.

The rather ornate design called "Dawn," with the figure medallion, might be used for a drawing-room in quiet tones. The blue and the brown being re-echoed in the hangings and furniture with white wood-work.

The "Rose Bush" would be appropriate to a dining or living-room where a rather dark and rich effect was aimed at. It would harmonize with oak framing and furniture.

The "Olive Spray" might be generally useful, and would answer as a background for pictures.

When wall-paper is used for ceilings the walls should be comparatively quiet.

I have found the "Vine Trellis" pattern has a good effect with a plain tint on the walls, and is especially useful in covering the rather blank and ugly plastered soffit of the staircase which so often meets the eye in a town-house of the older type.

"The Cockatoo" would answer in a large room where an ornate effect was desired, or it could be used as a frieze above panelling, or a plain tint.

The "Oak Tree" is on simpler lines and rectangular in feeling, combining a bordered field with a frieze.

In choosing wall papers to suit particular rooms, regard should be had to the character of

Wall-paper,  
"Olive  
Spray"



Designed by  
Walter Crane



Thoughts on  
House-  
Decoration

the lines of the pattern as well as the colour, bearing in mind that a pattern which runs into marked vertical lines would tend to increase

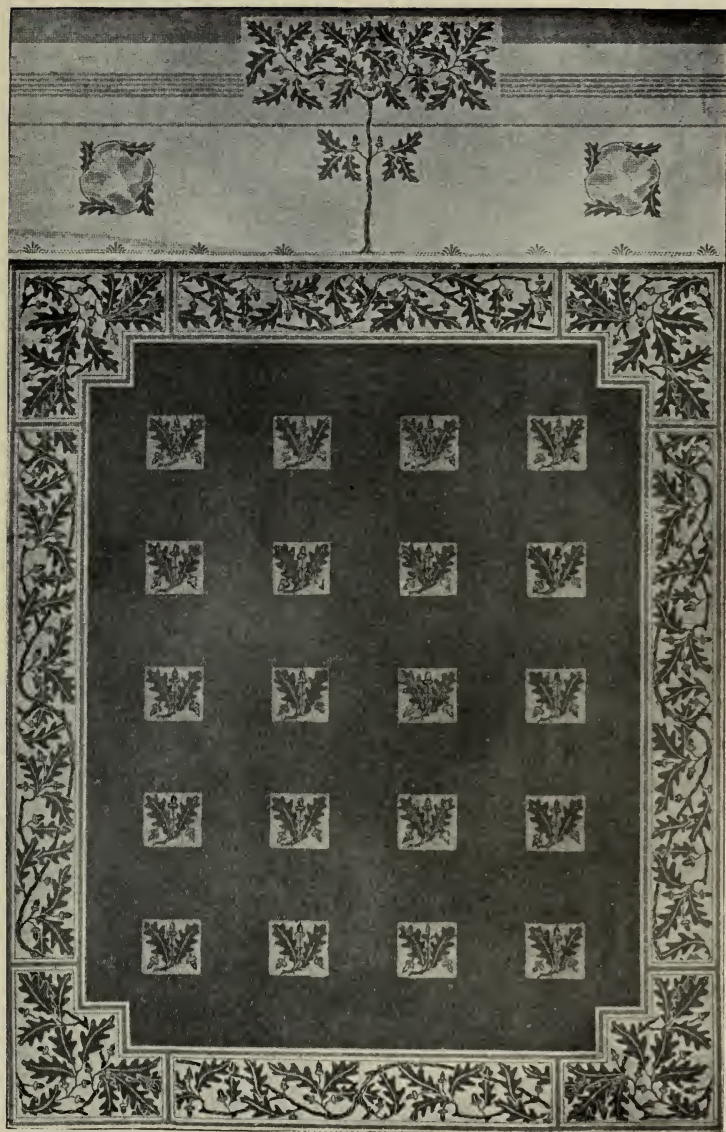
Wall-paper,  
"The  
Cockatoo and  
Pome-  
granate"



Designed by  
Walter Crane

the apparent height of a room, whereas a pattern of marked horizontal feeling would tend to make a room look lower and longer.

In designing complete schemes for wall-paper



Wall-paper  
Decoration  
"The Oak  
Tree"

Designed by  
Walter Crane

one's aim has been to balance the different quantities of pattern in the different parts, and to re-echo the leading lines, masses, and colours by different expedients, so as to keep an essential relationship between each part.

Relationship is, of course, the essential in all decoration, otherwise it becomes a patchwork of conflicting pattern and colour. It matters not what our materials may be, or by what means, costly or simple, we seek to obtain our effect, whether by painting, carving, gilding and rich textiles, metal or plaster work, stamped leather or wall-paper, stencilling, tiles and plain painting or stained wood and whitewash. All must be in keeping, and seem fit and in its right place and proportion, and suitable to its conditions and surroundings; rich and splendid if the aim is to be rich and splendid, simple and quiet if the aim is to be simple and quiet; but without the pretence of richness or obtrusive display on the one hand, or the extreme rudeness, baldness, and ugliness which sometimes accompany what looks like the affectation of simplicity on the other.

## OF THE PROGRESS OF TASTE IN DRESS IN RELATION TO ART EDUCATION.

IF taste in dress could be traced to, or its cultivation and exercise were solely due to, the influence of the constant study of beautiful forms and fine historical models in design, as well as of the living human figure, we might be justified in looking to our schools of art to give us the best types and standards in costume. There are, however, too many missing links between the ordinary art student and the practical designer, between the tasteful person and the leader of fashion, to enable us to prove a close connection of cause and effect in the matter.

No doubt the general and extended cultivation of a knowledge of art even on the ordinary art-school lines has contributed not a little to the general interest in artistic questions, and quickened the average eye to some extent; but it must be said that we have not yet succeeded in making our schools of art remarkable as sources of invention, of initiative, or, on the whole, distinguished for capacity of artistic selection. We should be expecting too much, per-

Of the  
Progress of  
Taste in  
Dress in  
Relation to  
Art Educa-  
tion



haps, to look for these things from training grounds. We ought to be satisfied if they ultimately turn out a fair average of capable artists, or, rather, enable students to become capable artists.

Even if all schools were equally well equipped in respect of models and teaching staff, under the present system there is practically but little margin left by the regime of the Board of Education for individual experiment and inquiry off the main lines of the prescribed courses of study in which passes or honours are obtainable.

The courses and classes of study are arranged in certain stereotyped ways, so that it becomes an object to attain a certain mechanical proficiency in certain methods of drawing, and the representation of a certain range of forms, in order to obtain certificates, rather than to cultivate the sense of beauty in individuals with a view to the public benefit and the raising of the standard of taste.

These defects are, it seems to me, inseparable from any attempt to teach art and taste in schools (that is to say by precept and principle rather than by practice), and upon a uniform system directed from a central department. Such an organization must necessarily tend to become rigid and work according to routine, and its administrators' best faculties are apt to be too much absorbed in mastering the details and rules of the system itself, and in the working of it, to be able to think out, much less to adopt, vivifying changes from time to time.



Greek  
Drapery,  
Temple of  
Niké  
Apteros,  
Athens



At certain stages, no doubt, by its command of expert opinion, such a Department may be of service to the schools of the country collectively in setting up a standard of taste, and advancing it from time to time by means of the national competitions, which are the means of instituting instructive comparisons between the work of different schools.

But the real educating after influences; the inspiring and refining sources of artistic invention in design must be found in the splendid array of examples of ancient art of all kinds in our museums and galleries—which are mines of artistic wealth to the student and the designer.

Yet the most ordinary art-school training cannot be without its effect, even if only negative. The mere practice of cultivating the observation and uniting it with a certain power of depicting form is an education in itself, and gives people fresh eyes for nature and life.

The mere effect upon the eye and feeling of following the pure lines and forms of antique Greek sculpture, and the severe and expressive lines of drapery can hardly be without a practical influence to some degree even upon the least impressionable.

At all events, we have living artists, many of whom have survived the usual art-school or Academic training, and who through their works have certainly influenced contemporary taste in dress, at least as far as the costume of women is concerned.

I think there can be no doubt, for instance, of the influence in our time of what is commonly

known as the pre-Raphaelite school, and its later representatives in this direction; from the influence of Rossetti (which lately, indeed, seems to have revived and renewed itself in various ways) to the influence of William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. But it is an influence which never owed anything to Academic teaching.

Of the  
Progress of  
Taste in  
Dress in  
Relation to  
Art Educa-  
tion

Under the new impulse—the new inspiration of the mid-century from the purer and simpler lines, forms, and colours of early mediaeval art, the dress of women in our own time may be said to have been quite transformed for a while, and though the pendulum of fashion swings to and fro, it does not much affect, except in some small details, a distinct type of dress which has become associated with artistic people—those who seriously study and consider of the highest value and importance beautiful and harmonious surroundings in daily life.

Beginning in the households of the artists themselves, the type of dress to which I allude, by imitation (which is the sincerest form of flattery—or insult, as some will have it) it soon became spread abroad until, in the seventies and early eighties, we saw the fashionable world and the stage aping, with more or less grotesque vulgarity, what it was fain to think were the fashions of the inner and most refined artistic cult. Commerce, ever ready to dot the i's and cross the t's of anything that spells increased profits, was not slow to flood the market with what were labelled “art-colours” and “aesthetic” fabrics of all kinds; but whatever vul-

garity, absurdity, and insincerity might have been mixed up by its enemies with what was known as the aesthetic movement, it undoubtedly did indicate a general desire for greater beauty in ordinary life and gave us many charming materials and colours which, in combination with genuine taste, produced some very beautiful as well as simple dresses: while its main effect is seen, and continues to be seen upon the domestic background of interior fittings, furniture, furniture-fabrics and wall-paper. The giddy, aimless masquerade of fashion continues, however, perhaps not without a sort of secret alliance with the exigencies of the factory and the market, and it has lately revived, in part, the modes of the grandmothers of the present generation, but, as is often the fate of revivals, has somewhat vulgarized them in the process.

Modern dress seems to be much in the same position as modern architecture. In both it looks as if the period of organic style and spontaneous growth has been passed, and that we can only attempt, pending important and drastic social changes, to revive certain types, and endeavour as best we can to adapt them to modern requirements.

Yet architects are bolder than dressmakers. They think nothing of going back to classic or mediaeval times for models, while the modiste generally does not venture much further than fifty or a hundred years back, and somewhat timidly at that. Small modifications, small changes and adaptations are always taking

## TYPES OF ARTISTIC DRESS





place, but it generally takes a decade to change the type of dress.

Regarding dress as a department of design, like design, we may consciously bring to bear upon it the results of artistic experience and knowledge of form.

Now, a study of the human figure teaches one to respect it. It does not induce a wish to ignore its lines in clothing it, to contradict its proportions, or to misrepresent its character.

It seems curious, then, that the courses of study from the antique and the life usual at our art schools do not have a greater effect upon taste and choice in costume than they appear to have.

We must remember, however, the many crossing influences that come in, the many motives and hidden causes that bear, in the complexity of modern existence, upon the question, and the stronger social motive powers which determine the forms of modern dress.

Fundamentally, we may say dress is more or less a question of climate.

Pure utility would be satisfied if the warmth is fairly distributed, and the action of the body and limbs is free. The child with a loose tunic, leaving arms and legs bare and free, still represents primitive and classic man; and he also often satisfies the artist.

But the child is free to grow, to get as much joy out of life as it can. It does not feel under the necessity of pleasing Mrs. Grundy, except perhaps when mud-pies are "off."

Primitive, again, and picturesque is the dress

- TYPES OF CHILDREN'S DRESS ·  
· UTILITY ·  
· SIMPLICITY ·  
· PICTURESQUENESS ·



of the labourer, ploughman, fisherman, navvy; though purely adapted to use and service. Concessions to aestheticism, if any, only come in by way of a coloured neckerchief, the broidery of a smock frock, or the pattern of knitted jersey.

Yet each and all are constant and favourite subjects of the modern painter. Why?

Fundamentally, I think, because their dress is expressive of their occupation and character, as may be said of the dress of all working people.

The peasantry in all European countries alone have preserved anywhere national and local picturesqueness and character in their dress; often, too, where it still lingers unspoiled, as in Greece, and in Hungary and Bohemia, adorned with beautiful embroidery worked by the women themselves.

The last relics of historic and traditional costume must be sought therefore among the people, and for picturesqueness we must still seek the labourer.

This seems a strange commentary upon all modern painstaking, conscious efforts to attain the natural, simple, beautiful, and suitable in dress, to be at once healthy and artistic. There really ought not to be so much difficulty about it.

If we lived simple, useful, and beautiful lives, we could not help being picturesque in the highest sense.

*There* is the modern difficulty.

We are driven back from every point to the ever-present social question.

TYPES OF WORKING DRESS  
UTILITY.  
PICTURESQUENESS.



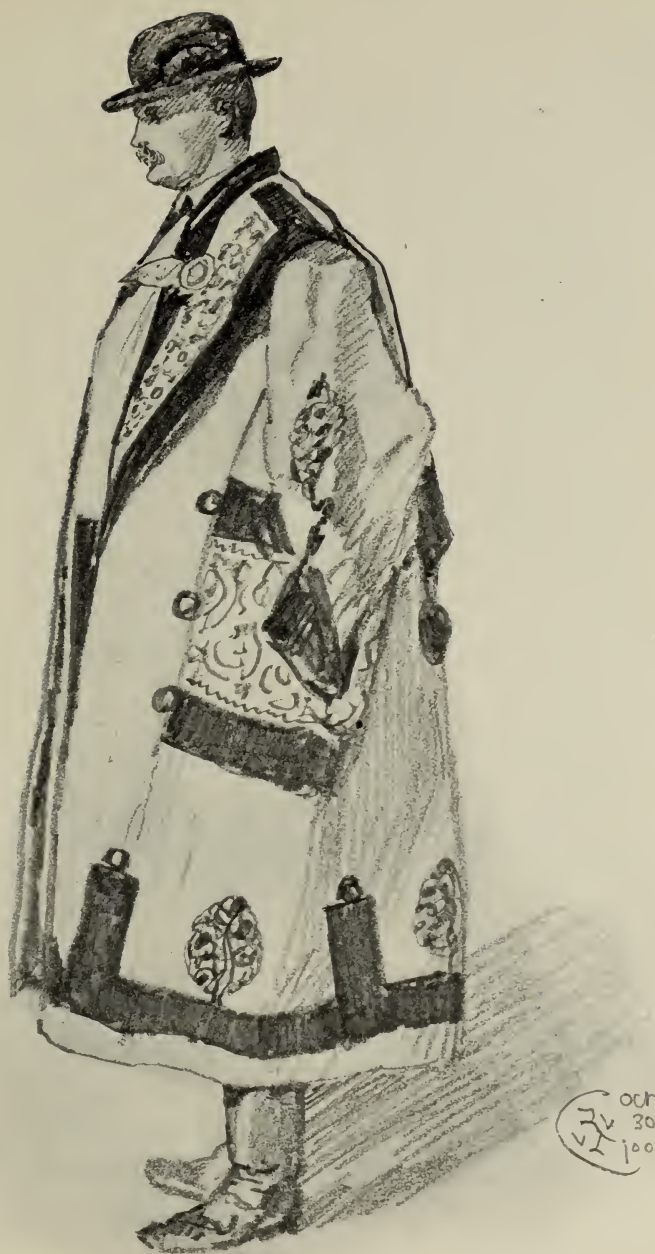
Hungarian  
Peasant  
Costume: a  
Transyl-  
vanian Bride



Sketched at  
Banffy  
Hunyad,  
Transylvania



Hungarian  
Peasant  
Farmer



Sketched at  
Banffy  
Hunyad,  
Transylvani

Therefore, it seems to me that, though highly valuable and educational, we must not rely entirely upon conscious cultivation and conscious effort to lift the question of dress above vulgarity and affectation.

Modern society encourages the ideal of doing nothingness, so that it becomes an object to get rid of the outward signs of your particular occupation as soon as you cease work, if you are a worker, and to look as if you never did any if you are not.

This notion, combined perhaps with the gradual degradation of all manual labour under the modern system, has combined with business habits and English love of neatness, and perhaps prosaic and Puritan plainness, to produce the conventional costume of the modern "gentleman"—really the business man or bourgeois citizen.

The ruling type always prevails, and stamps its image and superscription upon life everywhere.

Thus the outward and visible signs of the prosperous and respectable, the powerful and important, have come to be the frock-coat and tall hat—gradually evolved from the broad-brim and square cut jerkin of the Puritan of the seventeenth century.

Even the modern gentleman, when he takes to actually doing something, or playing at something, becomes at once more or less picturesque.

The flannels of the cricketer, and the boating man, the parti-coloured jerseys of our football

teams—the modern equivalent, I suppose, of the knightly coat heraldry of the lists—all have a certain character and expressiveness. The costume of the cyclist again is another instance of adaptation to pursuit allied to picturesqueness, since it acknowledges at least the form of figure, and especially the legs, lost in ordinary civilian costume. In the various forms of riding-dress, again, we get a certain freedom and variety in costume through adaptation, both in men and women's dress.

What modern costume really lacks is not so much character and picturesqueness, as beauty and romance—a general indictment which might be brought against modern life. We are really ruled by the dead weight of the prosaic, the prudent, the timid, the respectable, over and above the specializing adaptive necessities of utility before mentioned.

When we turn from the prosaic picturesqueness of such specialized dresses to the region of pure ornament, as in the modern full or evening dress of men and women, what do we find?

As far as men are concerned pure convention, the severest simplicity, without beauty, and almost without ornament, and, except in the case of those entitled to wear orders, confined to studs, watch-chain, etc. The clothes, the negation of colour—black, enlivened only by white linen and white waistcoat, and patent leather.

I have here drawn a contrast between a gentleman's dress of the present time and one of the fourteenth century.

Both are extremely simple in design; but the mediaeval one alone can claim beauty of design, as it is true to the lines of the figure, and does not cut it up by sharp divisions and contrasts.

In the repression of ornament we may detect another influence, that of monarchical and aristocratic institutions. Since if ornaments were freely worn by ordinary citizens, what would become of the doubtful distinction of ribbons and stars. The ordinary citizen, in the exercise of his individual taste, might have finer jewellery and better design upon him than the courtier and the diplomatist. That would never do, of course.

The same rock ahead will be found, I think, in the case of trousers.

Knee breeches, silk stockings, and buckled shoes are obviously more elegant and becoming than tubes of black cloth; but if the ordinary citizen takes to them what becomes of the official dignity of the golden footman, or of the cabinet minister at court, my Lord Mayor, Mr. Speaker, and other notabilities?

Men's dress having been reduced to the extreme of plainness in ordinary life, any relics of antiquity are used to denote official position, and the very plainness of evening dress is made use of to set off the decorations of courtly persons.

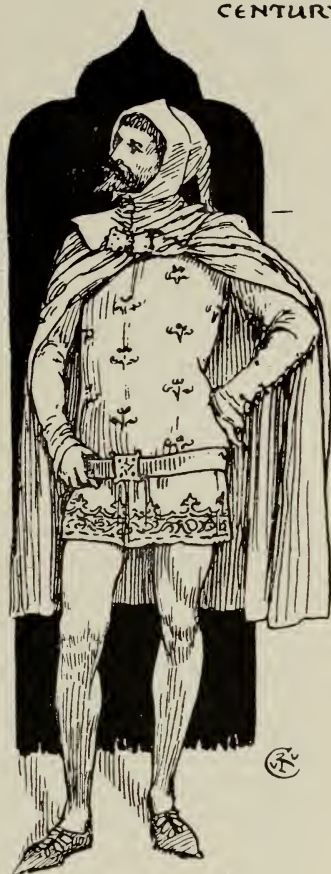
These are a few of the complexities which attend any serious attempt to reform men's dress. They serve to convince one that costume is really controlled by the forms of social life, condition, occupation, rank, general tradition,

A CONTRAST  
MODERN & MEDIAEVAL SIMPLICITY

19<sup>th</sup>  
CENTURY



14<sup>th</sup>  
CENTURY





sentiment, and sense of fitness, so that we can only reasonably expect great changes in the outsides of life when corresponding changes are affecting the inside—the economic foundations, constitution, and moral tone of society.

But let us look at the ladies.

Here at all events appears to be a field for the cultivation and display of taste and beauty for the sake of beauty and taste alone. Mere convenience and utility in a lady's evening dress does not appear to be consulted at all. It often loses much of its primal covering capacity, and takes the form of a floral dressing to set off the head and bust and arms of the fair wearer. Most delicate materials and colours are used—white samite, mystic, wonderful; trailing clouds of glory in tulle and gauze; Eastern embroidery, and Chinese and Indian silks, gold, coral, pearl, diamonds and precious stones, and flowers both real and (alas!) artificial, are some of the materials which contribute to the modern lady's evening toilette.

In the choice and use of these beautiful materials there is evidently abundant room for the exercise of the nicest judgement and the most refined and delicate individual taste. There can be no doubt, too, that these qualities are often met with, and that they are invariably found with a love and considerable knowledge of art. I do not say that a knowledge of art alone will enable people to dress tastefully. That is not always the case. The power of expression of taste or individuality in dress is no doubt like other gifts of expression, innate.

But a study of art, the training of the eye to appreciate the delicacies of beautiful line and quality of colour, and beauty of design in pattern, even without much executive power, must act upon the selective capacity generally. I think there is no doubt that we do see the signs of artistic culture, over and above natural distinction of choice, more frequently in the dress of refined and cultured women in our days than at any former period, perhaps, since the first half of the sixteenth century. There is more variety, more individuality, signs of that increasing independence of thought and action which distinguish our countrywomen.

The immense range of choice, both in simple and costly materials in women's dress, may be put down to increased commercial activity and the modern command of the markets of the world, no doubt. The taste and discrimination which selects and combines them in an artistic dress, is, to begin with, instinctive, but is largely aided and guided by conscious cultivation and the study of art and the works of artists, I think.

We may, indeed, detect certain distinct influences in certain leading types of women's dress, even in that comparatively narrow region left to individual choice by the dictates of fashion or the milliner, dressmaker, and draper, and comparatively few feel themselves at liberty to move much beyond this.

If then our dictators, for the mass, must at present be sought principally in these professional or trade directions we are thrown back

again upon the quality and effectiveness of our artistic and technical education.

The great municipalities are busy spending large sums upon technical institutes, where the artistic lamb is expected to lie down with the manufacturing and commercial lion, where science and art are to become inseparable, if not undistinguishable, and inventive design is expected to keep pace with the labour or wage-saving ingenuities, and mechanical economics forced upon the manufacturer by competition. Among other things millinery and dressmaking will be taught, so that one may suppose the technical school will have a direct bearing upon taste in dress.

The same difficulty arises here as in the case of art-school teaching. You may lead a horse to the water but you cannot make him drink. Rather, perhaps, we are providing patent buckets before securing a water supply. What I mean is that, ultimately, in all the arts, in all matters of taste and beauty we must go back to life and nature. Beauty is inseparably associated with love, and cannot be produced without it: and unless the conditions of ordinary life admit of beauty we must not expect the reproduction of beautiful things. We cannot expect that science, or mechanical principles, or commercial demand will enable us to produce it in any direction to order. We cannot expect to get beauty at any price, if while arranging an elaborate system of art education on the one hand we allow ourselves to destroy its sources in nature, in the beauty of our own land, by

ruthless destruction or vulgarization now too common. Beauty and taste can only spring out of the conditions or the materials which go to the making of a harmonious life. They must have opportunities of germinating and growing up in minds with leisure to think, with capacity to feel, with freedom and opportunity to select, with materials and margin for experiment, and above all with a centralizing social ideal—a keynote of love hope or faith.

Of the  
Progress of  
Taste in  
Dress in  
Relation to  
Art Educa-  
tion

Let us ask ourselves how far we are, individually or collectively, from the attainment of such conditions.

## OF TEMPORARY STREET-DECORATIONS

Of Temporary  
Street-  
Decorations

THE decoration of streets at times of public rejoicing seems to afford abundant opportunities for the exercise of artistic taste and fancy, and since in our time such occasions are apparently on the increase, it might be worth while for artists to give more serious attention to design of this kind. It cannot be said that hitherto public efforts at street decoration in this country have been very distinguished. English individualistic habits, and English commercial instincts are both unfavourable to artistic success in this direction; we are not good at collective expression in any art, and the new imperialism has not so far helped us to be articulate in street decoration. The adornment of our streets and public places usually falls into the hands of trade contractors, and anything like freshness of idea, taste, or pleasing fancy is distinguished rather by its absence. Our fiery patriotism seems quite content to let our decorative crowns and gilded emblems and wreaths be "made in Germany," and the popular imagination is sufficiently lifted by union jacks,



supplied in "all sizes" down to the pocket-handkerchief by the dauntless commercial instinct aforesaid.

Of Temporary Street-Decorations

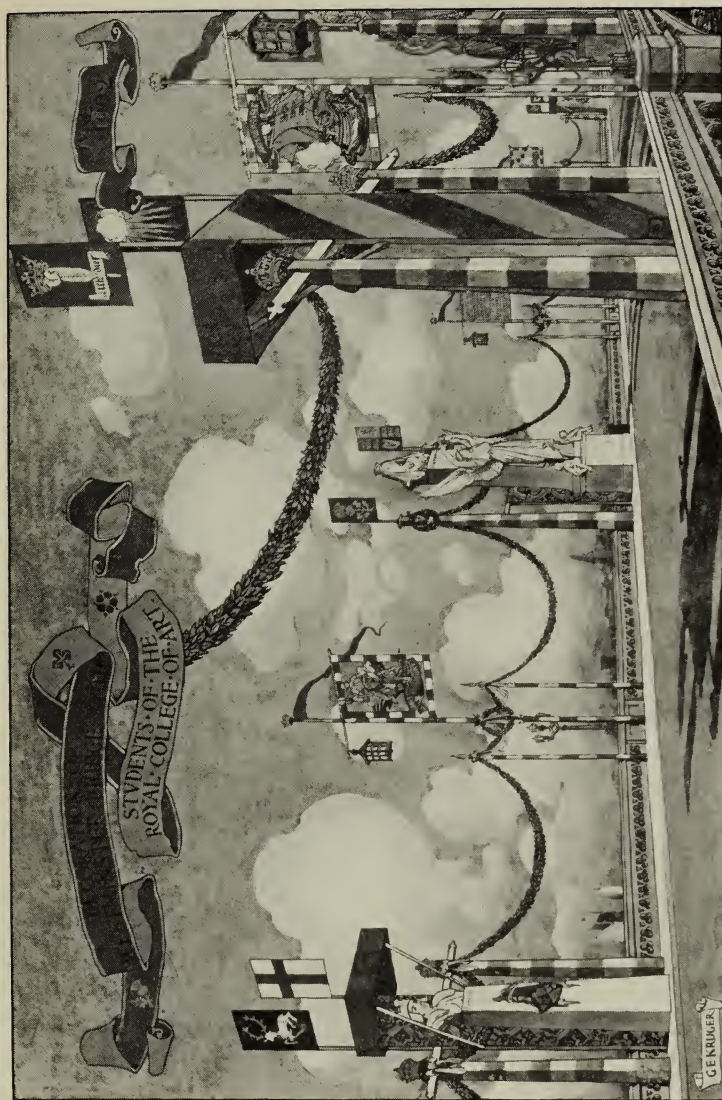
Nothing, of course, gives colour and movement so readily as bunting, and the very sight of a flag is exciting. But flags are dangerous things, and private zeal in the display of flags often outruns heraldic discretion. One sees strange treatment of the national emblem sometimes. A people so fond of waving them ought to know its own flags and how to hoist them one would think. I noted the other day a remarkable treatment of the red ensign, the usual arrangement of the union jack in dexter quarter being varied by cutting it into quarters and placing one quarter in the usual place and the other at the extreme lower corner of the fourth quarter of the red field, dropping the other two out altogether. This may have been from motives of economy. I have seen, too, the white ensign hoisted upside down! The old way of hanging gay rugs and tapestries from the window-sills would produce a very picturesque effect in a street, and would at all events avoid such a "nice derangement of epitaphs" as those above mentioned.

Some streets lend themselves to decorative effects better, of course, than others, and narrow streets are easier to decorate than wide ones.

Scale in regard to the buildings and the position of the decorations are of the greatest importance. In our London streets very frequently the houses differ in height and width of frontage as much as they differ in architectural taste and

period, and this increases the difficulty of effective decoration.

A Venetian mast may be in decent scale in relation to the height of buildings at one part of the street, or even on one side of a street, and quite ridiculous in regard to other buildings on the same or other side of the same street. Yet the street decorator clings to the Venetian mast as a chief means of street decoration, even if only a spar, with the tenacity of a shipwrecked sailor. The result, too, in such a climate as ours often is a wreck. Those poles recently placed in Piccadilly—one of the prettiest of our streets opposite the Park (perhaps because one side is left out!)—look too small, and are rather fussily garlanded, while the shields—bearing the portcullis and the rose alternately—are miserably undersized, and not of a fine shape. The best thing is the connecting garland with its lamps, but these ought to be thicker in the middle. Then again, the poles face only one way—outwards to the road, so that they do not tell much in perspective. Something on the principle of the cross-tree or yard-arm and hanging sign is more effective. At least in *one* piece of artistic decoration attempted for the coronation—I mean the scheme of decoration for Westminster Bridge by the Royal College of Art under the direction of Prof. Lanteri and Prof. Moira—this principle was adopted. Boldly designed banners painted by the students hung from cross-trees over the pavement, balanced by lanterns at the other end, while between them busts of heroic size of our kings and queens under canopies, and backed



Decoration  
of West-  
minster  
Bridge. By  
the Students  
of the Royal  
College of  
Art

From a  
Coloured  
Drawing by  
G. E. Kruger

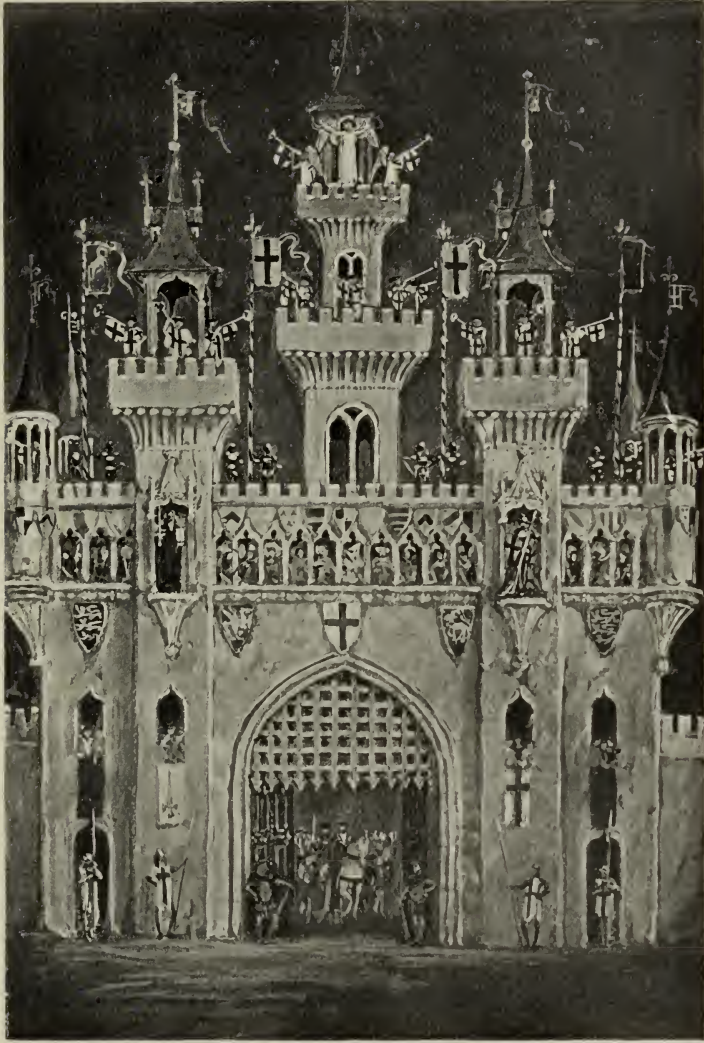
by stencilled hangings faced the roadway, these groups being connected with the masts which bore the banners by hanging garlands.

The tapering rectangular column of the new art mode with the flat trencher at the top might come in quite usefully as a substitute for the Venetian masts in places, and the flat top could be used for plants in pots, vases, gilt globes with victories on them, or other emblems, or heraldic beasts, or electric lamps. A continuous light arcade of such columns, connected by a light entablature bearing suitable inscriptions, with hanging garlands, or bay trees in tubs between, would be a pretty scheme for a straight, and not very wide street.

One generally feels the want of some connecting link across the roadway, overhead, in any parallel scheme of street decoration. A string of flags is the simplest way of doing this, and is done often enough, but if the street is sufficiently narrow a succession of cloths or banners hung horizontally across the street, forming a kind of irregular valarium, would have a good effect—say alternating in two or three colours, with bold heraldic devices, either national or appropriate to the locality, upon their fields. Streets hung in this way in red and white, in green and white, or blue and white would have a pleasant effect. Striped cloths could also be used in this way.

One consistent colour scheme, say the heraldic colours of the township (with Chinese lanterns strung across for night effect) for each street or section of the town, with an arch or gateway to





Suggestion  
for a  
Temporary  
Gatehouse at  
Temple Bar

By Walter  
Crane.



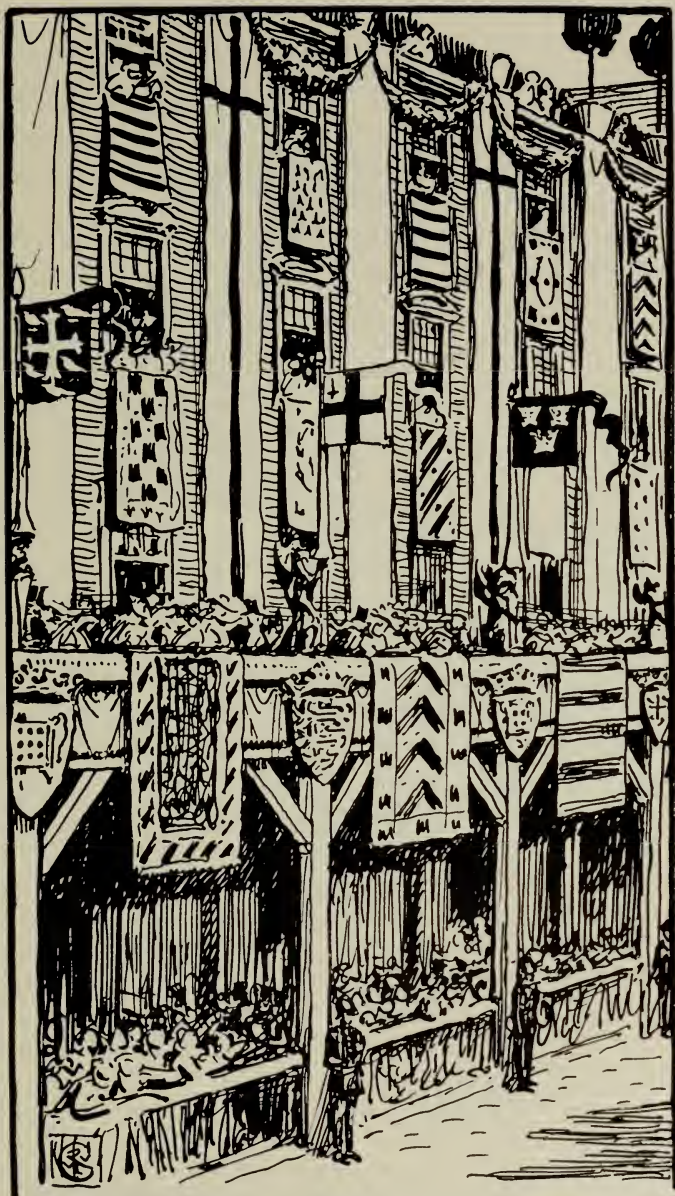
mark the entrance to each ward or district, would be a means of obtaining unity, as well as striking and harmonious decorative effect.

Something of this kind was in the mind of a deputation which waited on the Lord Mayor at the time of the coronation to offer a suggestion to the City, which would have lent itself well to such a treatment.

Starting from Temple Bar, the existing Griffin—or City dragon (which we whispered might be temporarily removed!)—might have made way for a fanciful Gothic gatehouse with gilded portcullis and gates, built of timber and plaster of course, but substantial enough to support warders and trumpeters, and a gallery of fair ladies who might shower roses or gilded oak leaves upon the King when he passed, as our Richard II was greeted at his coronation from the tower in Cheapside, which bore a golden angel upon its top. St. Paul and St. George should occupy niches on such a gateway, which should also display the banners and badges of the City and the Temple, and the arms of the City guilds, while Gog and Magog personified should stand at the gates.

Fleet Street should be arcaded by a series of simple timber supports upholding a balcony, or tier of seats, at the height of the first-floor windows. The timbers might be whitewashed and decorated with chevrons or other simple patterns in black or red, but the construction not concealed. And at regular intervals, upon piers, a bold heraldic beast (say the dragon of St. George) might support the City banner; Pega-

Temporary  
Street  
Decoration



TEMPORARY STREET DECORATION.  
ROUGH SKETCH TO SHOW ARCADED STREET.  
USE OF HANGING DRAPERIES & HERALDRY.

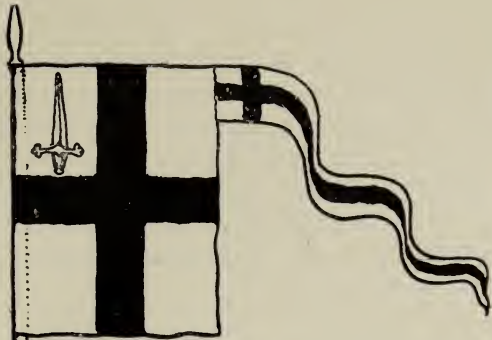
sus and the Lamb those of the Inner and Outer Temple to mark their boundaries, with the Red and the White Rose. At Clifford's Inn the Art Workers' Guild could hang out their badge, an' it liked them; while St. Dunstan, and the White and Blackfriars might appear further on.

I would drape the fronts of the houses in white and red, the St. George's Cross might run from end to end of Fleet Street, and on the parapets of the houses there should be a hedge or cresting of green boughs connected across the street at intervals by light, arching trellises surmounted by crowns, to be illuminated at night, and covered with green leaves and hung with the shields and badges beforenamed (which in the able hands of Mr. Barron, of the Society of Antiquaries, would not be the tame things to which we are too much accustomed).

Such a scheme could be a type for each ward, or, on the other hand, each ward could be different in scheme as well as colour, but each should have its gatehouse and its guild represented thereat.

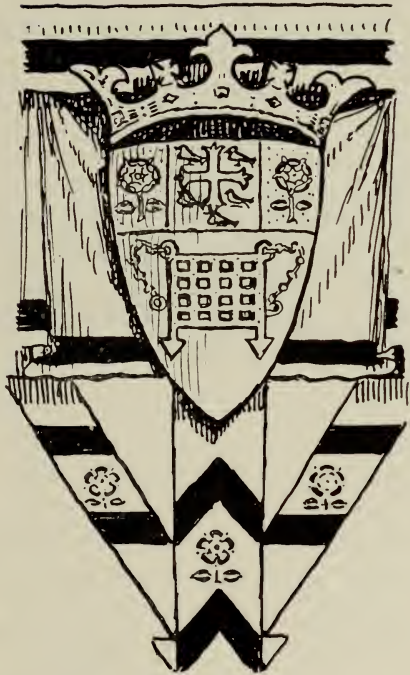
Well, the City considered itself sufficient to itself—is it not always self-sufficient? The Lord Mayor preferred to rely, possibly, upon the mute inglorious Alma-Tademas and St. John Hopes and Barrons concealed in the Guildhall Library—or shall we say, the contractors of Houndsditch. I fancy there was a suspicion that we were only early birds trying to get the contract, and that Lord Windsor (who headed the deputation) was perhaps the head of a decorating company, limited!

BANNER  
OF  
THE CITY  
OF  
LONDON



Temporary  
Street  
Decoration

ARMS OF WESTMINSTER



HERALDIC  
DRAGON  
SUPPORTER



TEMPORARY STREET DECORATION  
DETAILS IN PREVIOUS SKETCH IN ELEVATION.  
ENLARGED TO SCALE 1/2" TO 1 FOOT.

It is said the world knows nothing of its greatest men—perchance, also, it never sees its best street decorations. But how can one reasonably expect London to glow with enthusiasm over grand schemes of street decoration which principally consist of shining decorative lights carefully concealed under municipal or other bushels?



## OF THE TREATMENT OF ANIMAL FORMS IN DECORATION AND HERALDRY

THE forms of animals furnish the designer in all kinds of decorative work, whether flat or in relief, with pleasant means of enriching and enlivening his pattern.

Of the  
Treatment  
of Animal  
Forms in  
Decoration  
and Heraldry

Ornament may indeed reach great refinement and delicacy without the use of living forms, as it has done in the case of Arabian and Moorish types, and in such Persian work under Mohammedan influence as the superb carpet from the Mosque of Ardebil; yet a lover of incident and romance, of movement and variety—perhaps one might say a western imagination—welcomes the forms of animals, birds, and even humans, as delightful elements of pattern.

Originally, no doubt, like the recurring types of floral form in Oriental, Chinese and Indian and Persian work, animal forms were introduced with definite meaning, with symbolical and heraldic purpose, and (despite Mr. Lewis Day) I still think that ornament gains in dignity and character if it contains some kernel of thought or intention or poetic fancy in its meshes, in its

lines and curves, and the forms with which its inventor plays.

Technically, by the use of animal forms contrasting masses can be obtained in design of a kind not possible in any other way. A mass of stems and leaves and flowers in a tapestry is pleasantly broken by the varied shapes of figures and animals which give relief and breadth by their larger contours and masses of colour, and this power of contrast and mass are elements of great value. Even in a mechanically repeated surface pattern, woven or printed, interest, dignity, and distinction can be given by recurring elements of this kind, especially if we are careful about their choice and, above all, their treatment.

The treatment of animal forms in design of course depends greatly upon the conditions of the work, the material of its execution, and its use and position. The rich colour and texture of Arras tapestry, for instance, it is obvious would lend themselves to a much greater degree of realism than the more abstract treatment suitable to the limitations of inlaid work, or cloisonné enamel. In embroidery, again, the needle has considerable freedom as regards texture and the expression of surface, and in the case of the plumage of birds, may, as we see is done in Chinese and Japanese silk embroidery, approach nature in the construction and set of the feathers, and the sheen and gloss of their colour effect.

Even in the extremely abstract treatment necessitated by the exigencies of incised hiero-



Treatment of  
Animal  
Forms in  
Textiles

Royal  
Mantle from  
the Treasury  
of Bamberg,  
Twelfth  
Century  
(from De  
Farey)

Heraldic  
Treatment of  
Animal  
Forms in  
Textiles



Chasuble  
from the  
Cathedral of  
Anagni,  
Thirteenth  
Century  
(from De  
Farcy)



Treatment of  
Animal  
Forms in  
Textiles



Sicilian Silk  
Pattern.  
Fourteenth  
Century  
(Fischbach)



Treatment of  
Animal  
Forms in  
Textiles



Sicilian Silk  
Pattern.  
Fourteenth  
Century  
(Fischbach)



Treatment of  
Animal  
Forms in  
Textiles

Sicilian Silk  
Pattern.  
Fourteenth  
Century  
(Fischbach)





Sicilian Silk  
Pattern.  
Fourteenth  
Century  
(Fischbach)

Treatment of  
Animal  
Forms in  
Textiles



Sicilian Silk  
Pattern.  
Fourteenth  
Century  
(Fischbach)



Treatment of  
Animal  
Forms in  
Textiles



Sicilian Silk  
Pattern.  
Fourteenth  
Century  
(Fischbach)





Sicilian Silk  
Pattern.  
Fourteenth  
Century  
(Fischbach)

Treatment of  
Animal  
Forms in  
Textiles



Sicilian Silk  
Pattern.  
Fourteenth  
Century  
(Fischbach)

glyphics we can hardly find finer examples of treatment, so direct and unerring is the characterization, than the birds and animals of the ancient Egyptians. The same power of characterization, though with a freer hand, is also seen in their mural paintings.

The early Greek potters ran them close in designing the black silhouettes of animals form-

Of the  
Treatment  
of Animal  
Forms in  
Decoration  
and Heraldry



Embroidered  
Tabard,  
Sixteenth  
Century,  
in the  
Archaeo-  
logical  
Museum at  
Ghent (from  
De Farcy)

ing borders around their vessels and vases; but we find here at work a conscious ornamental feeling in the treatment of their forms—an apparently intentional arrangement of the lines of the animal into more or less formal curves. A running antelope, for instance, will take a sort of volute curve, and in one case the volute itself is drawn beneath. The forms of these animals and birds of the vase paintings were no doubt influenced by the brush, and many of



them might be described as *brush forms*. The bodies of the birds and fish are oval or ovoid masses, and in their repetition, by means of



such ornamental generalization, a certain balance and rhythm is obtained.

Indeed, there is no better method of insuring ornamental effect when introducing animal forms than the practice of designing them within certain definite boundaries, which may be geo-

metric, such as squares, circles, and ovals, according to the contours of the masses required in the particular design.

The Japanese give in one of their drawing-

Of the  
Treatment  
of Animal  
Forms in  
Decoration  
and Heraldry

Detail from  
Embroidered  
Tabard,  
Sixteenth  
Century



books some clear adaptations of birds and animals enclosed in circles, and they are very ingenious pieces of packing.

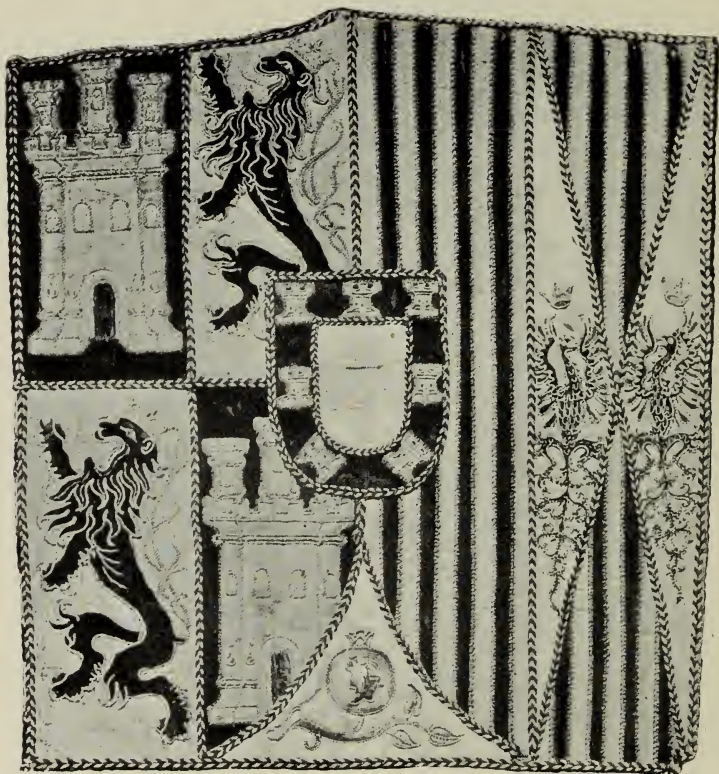
The early weavers of the Egypto-Roman textiles of Alexandria and of Byzantium, and



Of the  
Treatment  
of Animal  
Forms in  
Decoration  
and Heraldry

of the renowned Sicilian silks from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, and those of Lucca of the fourteenth, all revelled in animal forms, and were adepts in their treatment. In the

Detail from  
Embroidered  
Tabard,  
Sixteenth  
Century



latter cases they were used symbolically and heraldically, and, indeed, with the development of heraldry in the middle ages under feudalism, such elements became the principal elements in decoration of all kinds, so much so that it might

be almost said that heraldry was *the* ornament and decoration of the mediaeval times.

Our Richard II, it will be remembered, in

Of the  
Treatment  
of Animal  
Forms in  
Decoration  
and Heraldry

ANIMAL FORMS IN DECORATION  
& HERALDRY. The Robe of

RICHARD II<sup>nd</sup>,  
From the picture  
at Wilton House



the famous Wilton picture, is kneeling in a robe of gold tissue woven with the badges of his house—the hart couchant and the phoenix—repeated all over as in a sort of diaper, and there are abundant instances among our brasses,

stall plates, and effigies, of the splendid treatment of heraldry in the arms, as well as the



dresses of knights and ladies bearing their family totems thick upon them.

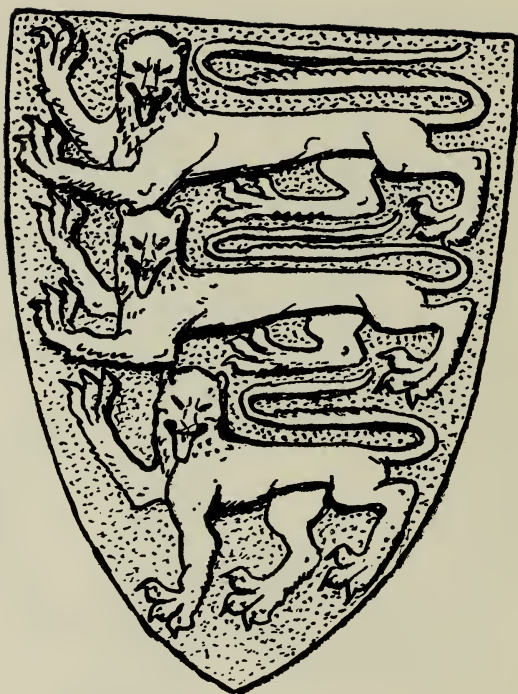
Boldness, spirit, distinctness of colour and form, and characterization governed by orna-

mental colour and effect, seem to be the chief principles in designing heraldic animals.

Of the  
Treatment  
of Animal  
Forms in  
Decoration  
and Heraldry



They not only have to be depicted, but *displayed*. Therefore every distinctive and important attribute or characteristic is emphasized. The lion's mane and tail become foliated,



The Lions  
(or Leopards)  
of England,  
from the Tomb  
of William de  
Valence, Earl  
of Pembroke,  
Westminster  
Abbey. 1296.



and his legs are fringed and tasselled. His claws are spread wide—cleared for action; his mouth is well open, and his long red, curly

Of the  
Treatment  
of Animal  
Forms in  
Decoration  
and Heraldry



From the Tomb of  
Edmund Crouchback,  
Earl of Lancaster. 1296.  
Westminster Abbey.

tongue rollicks out between his emphatic teeth. A lion out of a cage in the Zoological Gardens would be no manner of use on a coat, or as a crest or a supporter. The endeavour of later times to make the heraldic lion a more reason-

able being has only tamed and degraded him. He looks round-headed, muzzy, and spiritless.

Much the same principles apply to the treatment of the other "fearful wild fowl" of heraldry, as well as the necessity for very careful decorative spacing. I will only recall, in this connection, the spacing of the English leopards in the fourth quarter of the royal arms on a shield of thirteenth century shape as offering good field to a designer from the exercise of ingenuity in space filling.

## OF THE DESIGNING OF BOOK-COVERS

THE book-cover, as a field for surface design, appears at first sight to offer in its many varieties a less restricted field for invention than perhaps any portable object of common use which demands the attention of a decorator.

Of the  
Designing of  
Book-covers

Yet in no field of design are certain qualities more essential to success—qualities, too, outside the particular conditions of the various methods, and processes used in the production of book-covers.

These are, in chief, tastefulness and sense of scale and proportion, important enough it will be said in all design, but narrowed down to the limited field of the book-cover, and in full view of its object and purpose, they become all-important.

Limited, for instance, to the narrowest demands of utility—an inscription or title on side or back needful to distinguish the outside of one book from another, questions of choice of scale, of lettering in relation to the size and proportion of the cover, of the choice of the

form of the lettering and the spacing of the letters upon the cover immediately arise.

Now the side of a book-cover presents a flat surface within rectangular limits, varying in size according to the folding of the sheet of paper which determines the size of the book to be covered—folio, quarto, octavo, and so on.

The book itself is a rectangular object as it lies on the table. It is a casket of thought at its best, at its worst it contains records or human remains of some kind.

The rectangularity, however, is what will influence the designer, from the spacing of his block or tablet of lettering, to the intricate arabesque of the most elaborate gold tooling.

The best cover designs are those, to my mind, wherein the feeling of the angularity of the enclosure is expressed or acknowledged in this way, but of course it may be felt and expressed in a variety of ways.

In the old stamped leather and pigskin bindings of the early days of printing of the books from Venice and Basle, for instance, a frequent and very satisfactory plan was to form a series of borders, one within the other, from the edge of the book, enclosing a central panel, left plain except for the title, stamped or inscribed upon the upper part of this plain panel. The borders were formed of stamps of different patterns, heraldic devices, scroll-work, emblems enclosed in straight lines. These designs are often models of scale in book ornament, and being carefully spaced and composed of repeating

Binding in  
Black  
Morocco,  
with Medal-  
lions and  
Coat-of-arms,  
by Thomas  
Berthelet  
(Sixteenth  
Century)





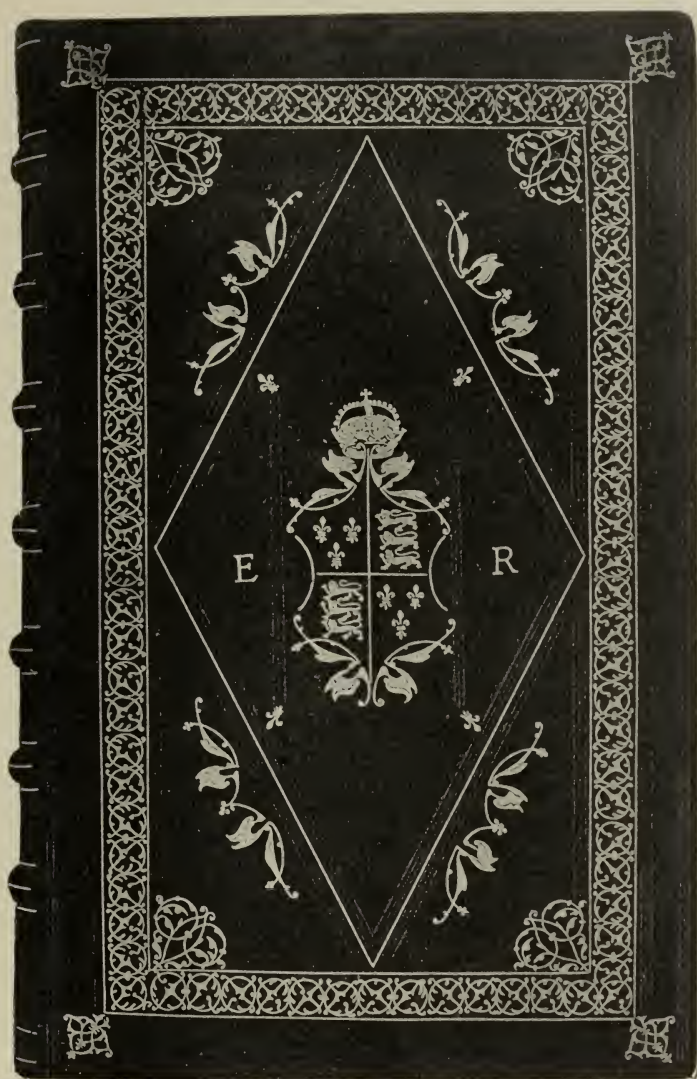
elements, have a delicate and at the same time rich effect.

I need not dwell upon the splendid jewelled and silver mounted manuscripts of the scriptures of Byzantine times, which called in the work of other craftsmen, since I presume one is dealing rather with the design of surface ornament as a matter of mass and line adapted to the ordinary conditions of the book-cover.

The method of stamping the coat-of-arms of the owner boldly upon the centre of the sides in gold upon leather covers, used from the sixteenth century and onwards, has a dignified effect, and these stamps, whether heraldic or of abstract ornamental elements, are often beautiful examples of rich and effective spacing within narrow limits, the enclosing shape or boundary indicated only by the edges of the device, which fits into its invisible shell, as it were, without effort and without any sense of cramping.

The designers of the stamps either blind or in gold must have been in close touch with the designer of printers' ornaments—initial letters, headings, borders, and the like—if not in some cases identical with them, and to this no doubt we owe that sense of scale and proportion in the ornamentation of the earlier bindings.

In gold-tooled designs the necessity of their having to be composed or built up of certain restricted elements, or separate tools, the ingenious combination of which produces the delicate arabesques of line and leaf and floral forms we admire as the crown and glory of the



Binding in  
Black  
Morocco,  
with Arms of  
Edward VI,  
by Thomas  
Berthelet  
(Sixteenth  
Century)

binder's craft, has also contributed to the preservation of scale, since the tools must necessarily be limited in size.

Before the recent revival in this craft, in which so much is due to the taste and skill of Mr. Cobden-Sanderson, there was a tendency towards over-small, frittered and meaningless detail in gold tooling, and binders were given to mechanical repeats of stock tools and stamps.

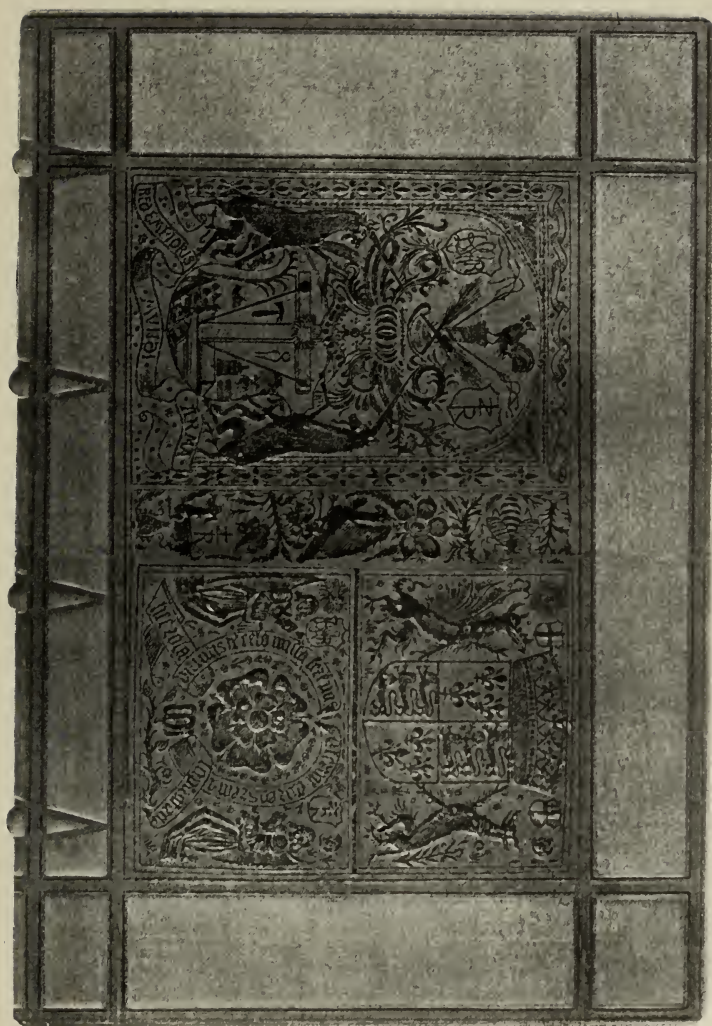
Yet repetition of forms or lines may be used tastefully as well as in a commonplace way.

Few methods in tooling a book-cover are more appropriate and satisfactory than the diaper, which is sometimes used all over the cover, and sometimes covers the inner panel only.

The decoration of the back of the book-cover requires particular care. In gold-tooled bindings the ornament may effectively be concentrated upon the back, which of course must include the title, leaving the sides plain.

When the sides are decorated the back must be the link to connect the obverse of the book with the reverse—unless we like to say front side and back side.

But I am trespassing upon the binder's province. The cloth cover seems to be a sort of compromise, though often agreeable enough. Our continental neighbours issue their books in limp paper wrappers, expecting them to be bound as a matter of course. This may account for the high state of the binder's craft, as a craft, in France. Here, our publishers vie with each other in issuing their books in attractive cloth



Binding in  
Stamped  
Calf, with  
Panels re-  
presenting  
the Emblems  
of the  
Passion, with  
Unicorns as  
Supporters,  
and the Arms  
of France  
and England,  
with Tudor  
Rose, etc.  
(Sixteenth  
Century)



gilt covers which at one time were intended to rival the gold-tooled binding. Of late we have seen every kind of eccentricity upon book-covers both in design and execution, gold, silver, black and white, and various colours being used in cloth printed covers, and designers often going far in the pictorial direction. We may see the influence of the poster, but still more so when we come to the printed paper cover which imposes still fewer restrictions upon the designer, in fact, none at all, except that of space—unless his sense of fitness imposes limits upon himself; yet cloth covers have perhaps shown more licence than the printed paper cover of late.

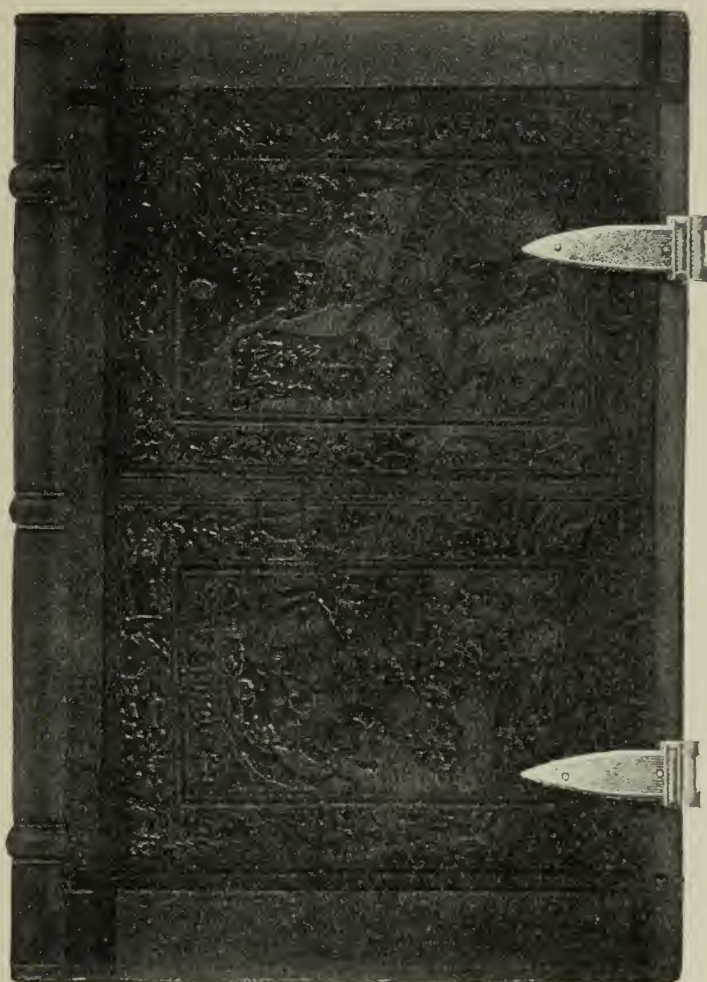
The cover printed in few and frank colours and varnished for protection from wear has had a considerable vogue for Christmas books of the lighter sort and for those principally intended for children. These were, when first introduced, rather shocking to the bookselling mind, which went by weight and the amount of gold on a cloth cover, in appraising literary and artistic worth in the market.

When a certain thin square volume for which I was responsible was modestly offered at 5s., the usual test being applied, the answer was, "This will never do!"—the public, however, was of a different opinion.

It may be said for the cover printed in colours, when it encloses a book printed in colours, that it has a certain fitness, and for the rest must depend largely upon the designer.

The illustrated magazine cover has exercised





Binding of  
Oak Boards  
covered with  
Stamped  
Calf, with  
Panels Re-  
presenting  
the Baptism  
of Christ and  
St. George  
and the  
Dragon, by  
John Reynes  
(Sixteenth  
Century)

a good deal of artistic ingenuity, and always presents the problem of the treatment of lettering as an essential part of the design, as indeed it always should be. There is something attractive about the angular and abstract forms of letters used in contrast with the free lines of the human figure and drapery, or floral ornament, or heraldry, and in a cover design to be printed from a line block the designer may indulge his feeling for these contrasting elements.

Here again the influence of the poster has come in, the conditions of the magazine cover in its struggle for existence on the bookstall being similar to the struggle for pre-eminence upon the hoarding among its larger commercial cousins. In the covers of the magazine, the illustrated weekly journal, and the railway novel we see the popular side of cover design and decoration, largely intended in the first place to attract attention, with a view of immediate sale.

Like all competitive processes with a commercial object, while certain qualities such as a kind of force or eccentricity may be evolved, it generally leads to deterioration on the artistic side. The final test of all design, and especially design of book-covers—the apparel of our companions and friendly counsellors—seems to be wrapped up in the question: “Can you live with it?”

One may admire the skill and celerity of a juggler and conjurer, but it would be uncomfortable to sit frequently at table with a professor of the craft who was given to whisk away one's dinner napkin, swallow the knives and forks, or

Binding in  
Brown Calf,  
inlaid by the  
Wotton  
Binder  
(Sixteenth  
Century)



discover the roast mutton in his neighbour's pocket.

So a sensational book-cover may startle us by its audacity, but it is apt to stare at us horribly upon the drawing-room table—and we can hardly be expected to re-furnish entirely to suit its complexion.

A painter I know tells me that there are two classes of pictures—"pictures to live with and pictures to live by."

Books or book covers might be divided as books to be taken care of and books to use.

The aristocracy, in their morocco and gilded coats, seem too costly and precious to handle every day and be dimmed by London smoke and dust. Few could duplicate their favourite books, so in the end the quiet cloth cover with its plain lettering is welcome for work-a-day, while, do as we may, the motley crowd in paper will press in and flaunt their little hour, "yellow and black and pale and hectic red," driven like leaves before the breath of passing interest, some, perhaps, at last finding rest, and resurrection, in the portfolios of the careful collector.



## OF THE USE OF GILDING IN DECORATION

THE use of gilding in decoration of all kinds seems to be as fascinating to the artist as its pursuit in the solid form appears to be to a large proportion of the human race. In both instances, too, there are risks to be run; in both there is use or abuse of the material involved.

Of the Use of  
Gilding in  
Decoration

The uses of gilding in art are manifold. We may regard it as the most precious and beautiful means of *emphasis in design*. A method of heightening certain important parts, such as the initial letters of an illuminated manuscript, where, by raising the letter in gesso, or gold size and burnishing, an additional richness and lustre is obtained, especially with the use of full colours, such as ultramarine, the deep blue and vermillion which warm the heart in looking at the manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The jewel-like sparkle, too, of the burnished gold used for raised leaves and fruits here and there among the delicate arabesque page-borders as in French manuscripts of the early fourteenth century has a most charming effect, and contains



Apparta-  
menti  
Borgia,  
Vatican,  
Rome, show-  
ing Pintur-  
icchio's  
fresco: "The  
Salutation"  
and a Por-  
tion of the  
Decoration  
of the Vault



From a  
Photograph  
by Anderson



Appartamento  
Borgia,  
Vatican,  
Rome, showing  
Portion  
of "The  
Salutation"  
fresco, with  
Enrichments  
raised in  
Gesso

From a  
Photograph  
by Anderson

suggestions for the use of gold in larger kinds of decorative work.

Gold, too, may be used *as light* in drawing, as a heightening to take the place of white on a dark-toned paper. Burne-Jones revived this method with fine results.

Gold is a most valuable means of harmonizing different colours used in the same design or decoration, and is often useful *as an outline* in flat decoration, and while it can be effectively used with the full range of colour where very rich effects are sought, it also combines well with any single colour in decoration.

The late G. F. Watts told me he considered *blue and gold* to be the typical colours of the universe.

Certainly they form one of the most—if not the most—beautiful of harmonies.

In the Appartamenti Borgia in the Vatican at Rome—a series of vaulted rooms decorated by Pinturicchio—the prevailing harmony is blue and gold, the field of the vaulting being blue with raised arabesques in gold emphasizing the ribs, while the arched spaces formed by the vaulting on the side walls are filled with figure subjects in fresco, in which the gold note is re-echoed by certain parts such as armour, weapons and caskets being raised in gesso and gilded. The whole has a very rich and splendid but quiet effect. There is a reproduction to scale of a portion in South Kensington Museum—and also one of the room of Isabella d'Este at Mantua, which has a rich ceiling in gold and colour.



Palermo:  
Cappella  
Reale,  
Interior

From a  
Water-  
colour  
Sketch by  
Walter Crane

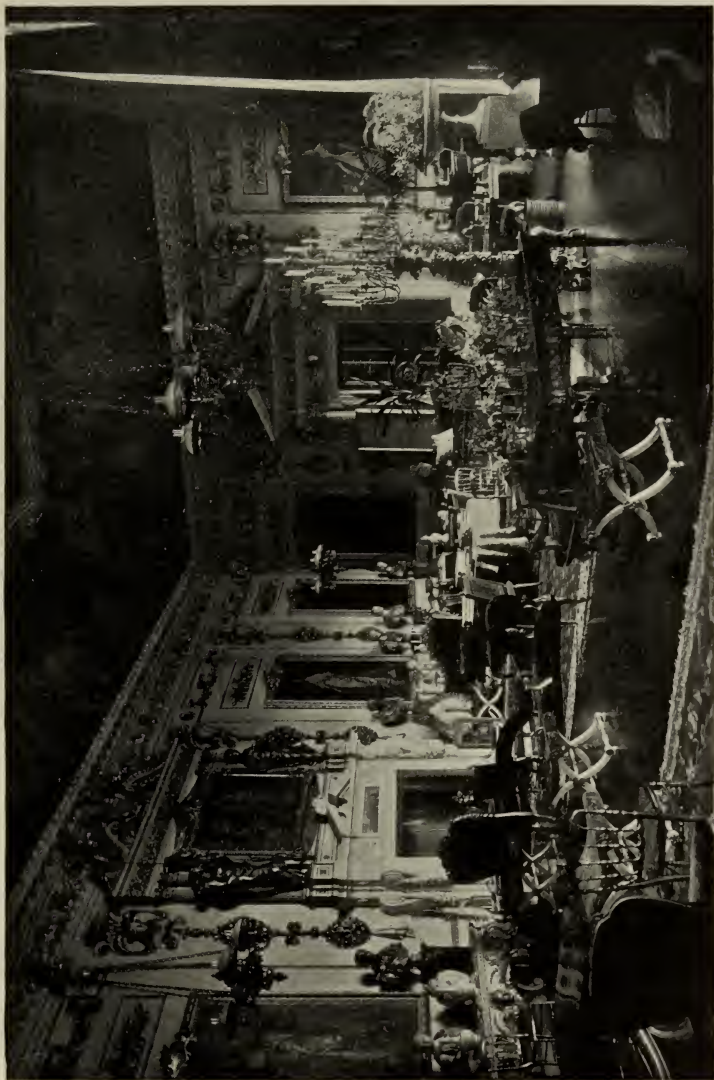


The lining of a certain dining-room in Prince's Gate lately sold and removed might be quoted as a modern instance of blue and gold decoration. It is supposed to have cost an architect his reason, and both the painter and the patron more than either bargained for, as well as their friendship, but the result was most artistic, original and beautiful. Need I say the motive was the peacock, and the artist Mr. Whistler?

"There is safety in a swallow-tail," says Carlyle in "*Sartor Resartus*." That there is safety in white and gold appears to be the creed of the modern decorator. I heard a lady say she liked white and gold; it "always reminded her of champagne," possibly it may remind others of a balance at their bankers. There is a well-known firm of architects in New York by the name of Mackim, Meade and White, who have been re-christened in the profession as "Mackim, White and Gold," owing to their fondness for that blend in interior decoration, in association with what is called "old colonial" architecture.

One can obtain every variety of metallic tint related to gold by lacquering over silver leaf. I adopted this method in a room, using a coffered ceiling with the design of a vine in relief, and a frieze panelled with figure subjects (*Æsop's "Fables"*). The light came from a large bay window at one end of the room, and so the edges of the reliefs caught the light. The general effect being subdued silver and bronze tones, relieved by touches of ruddy gold. (See illustration, p. 261.)





The Double  
Cube Room,  
Wilton  
House.  
Showing the  
Inigo Jones  
Decoration  
of the Walls,  
with the Van-  
dyke Por-  
traits in the  
Panels

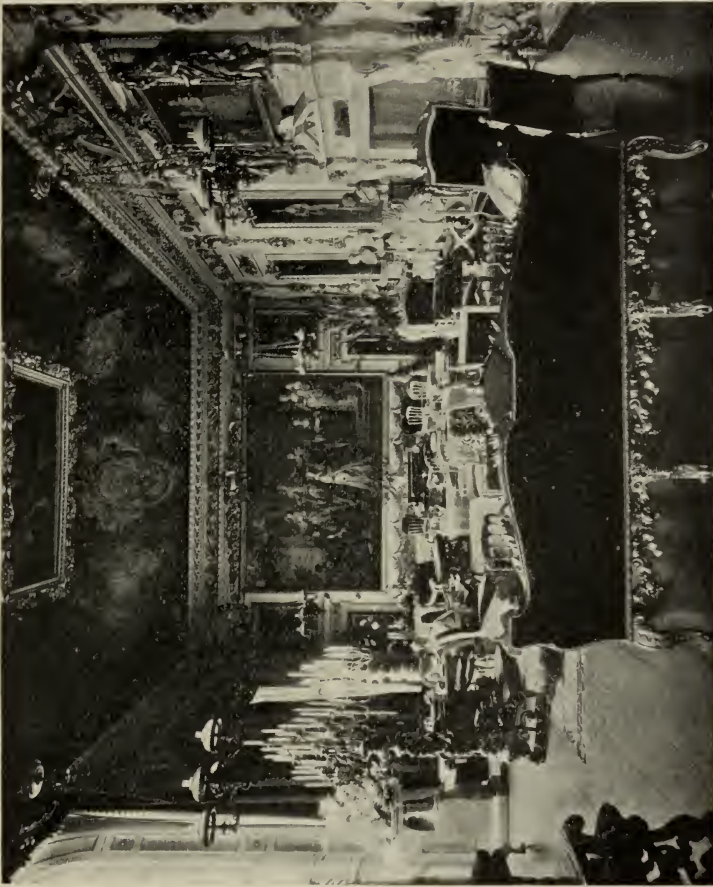
From a  
Photograph  
by Brooks  
and Son,  
Salisbury

The use of *gold as an isolator* has long been established in the form of picture frames—the gilded “flat” or moulding clearing a picture from its surroundings more effectually and easily than any other known method ; but the picture frame, as I think I have before said, is only a relic of the architectural relation of the picture to the wall, where it originally formed a panel, as may be seen, for instance, in the Vandyke room at Wilton House.

Gold also forms a most valuable field or ground for colours, as in decorative painting and mosaic work, or may be used in painting with charming effect as a *colour*, as the early painters used it, for rich brocades and patterned stuffs, rays of light, the emblazoning of heraldic devices, inscriptions, and small fine details of all kinds.

Gold in Byzantine art always seems to have been used with a sense of dignity and of solemnity. The gold tesserae which form the field of the mosaic decoration in the subdued light in St. Mark's at Venice impress one with an effect of quiet splendour. There is nothing gaudy or flaming. The light falls through the narrow windows of the dome, and moves softly over the concave gilded surface, reflected backwards and forwards in every variety of tone as the sunlight travels, and the great figures and emblems loom majestically and mysteriously upon the gold field.

Another splendid example, and again chiefly a harmony of blue and gold, is seen in that exquisite gem of architecture and mosaic decor-



The Double  
Cube Room,  
Wilton  
House

From a  
Photograph  
by Brooks  
and Son,  
Salisbury

ation, the Cappella Palatina in the Royal Palace at Palermo.

The opposite principle in the use of gilding is illustrated in St. Peter's at Rome, and in many renaissance interiors when the mouldings, capitals, cornices, and architectural enrichments of all kinds in relief are picked out in gold. The splendour may be there—if only in the impression of costliness—but it seems of a more obvious kind, more conscious and self-assertive, and when the principle is carried thoroughly out of gilding every prominence, the effect may easily become ostentatious and vulgar.

I think it is important not to lose the sense of preciousness in the use of gilding, and, as with costly marbles and beautiful materials of all kinds, one should be careful not to put them to base uses, or lose their artistic value by excess.

It is comparatively easy to offer up pious opinions on the use of gold; but the real problems only begin in front of the particular work in hand, and the conditions under which the decorative artist works continually vary. One may be guided by certain principles, but much more by feeling and judgement, which go to form what is called taste. Every work must be finer in proportion to the thought and feeling put into it, but no amount of gold-leaf will cover the absence of taste and sense of proportion.

## OF RAISED WORK IN GESSO

DECORATIVE design in gesso stands, it may be said, midway between painting and sculpture, partaking in its variations of the characters of each in turn—the child or younger sister of both, holding, as it were, the hands of each, playful, light-hearted, familiar, associated in its time with all kinds of domestic furniture and adornment.

Of Raised  
Work in  
Gesso

With an origin perhaps as ancient as the other arts, its true home is in Italy. We find it at Pompeii, with its relatives, stucco and plaster-work, in association with architecture, which also are seen in such choice forms in the decoration of the ceilings and walls of Roman tombs, such as the famous examples of the Via Latina. We find gesso work also in direct association with painting in the devotional pictures of the early Italian schools, used for the diapered backgrounds and nimbi of saints, and raised emblems and ornaments. It reappears in our own country in the painted rood-screens of Norfolk and Suffolk. At Southwold, for instance, there is a notable screen with panels, painted with figures of the apostles,



the backgrounds consisting of diapers in raised gesso.

The revival of classical taste and love of classical lore and ornamental detail at the time of the renaissance in Italy led to later and highly ornate development of gesso and stucco, of which we may see elaborate examples in the ceilings of the Doria palace at Genoa, for instance; and in the fine decorative scheme of Pinturicchio in the Appartamenti Borgia in the Vatican, gilded gesso is used for caskets, weapons, and other details in the frescoes painted on the walls, gilded relief work and blue grounds being carried out on the vaulted ceilings above, in arabesques and medallions.

A beautiful model of part of the Appartamenti, by Signor Mariani, may be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, where also choice examples of gesso work may be found in picture and mirror frames, and gilded coffers or cassones. There are several of these from Florence with figures in relief on flat backgrounds, punctured or stamped with patterns on the paste, and afterwards gilded with rich ornamental effect.

Then again we find gesso used underneath the burnished gold letters and leaf work of the mediaeval illuminators.

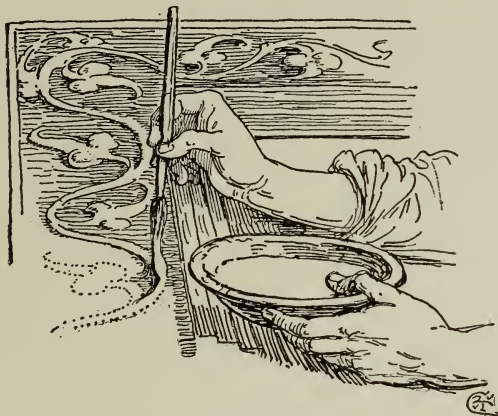
The Italian craftsman's skill in gesso seems to survive in the Italian confectioner with his free-hand decorations squeezed out in the form of raised ornaments of plaster and sugar on birthday cakes and such like; and Italian workmen are still the masters of the craft and mystery of

all manner of plaster-work, including moulding and casting.

Of Raised  
Work in  
Gesso

Now there are various kinds of gesso and recipes for making it, and it can be worked in different ways, and on different scales, and in different degrees of relief.

For fine work on a small scale, such as might be used for caskets or small panels in cabinets,



Method of  
Working  
with the  
Brush in  
Gesso

and the decoration of furniture generally, Gesso Duro is the best.

It is a mixture of whitening soaked in cold water till quite soft, glue or gelatine, boiled linseed oil, and a little resin, mixed well together to the consistency of cream. There is also a gesso used by frame-makers composed of whitening and parchment size.

Supposing it is desired to work a design on a panel of wood, the wood had best have a coat of shellac or varnish first. Then having determined your design lay on the paste with the point of a

Filling for  
Picture-  
frame, in  
Gesso Duro



Designed by  
Walter Crane

long-pointed sable brush—the kind known as a “rigger,” or small water-colour brush will answer—lightly dropping the gesso from the point of the brush or slowly dragging it, so that the gesso may flow from its point, as the design may require, and adding more of the paste where greater relief is required.

Gesso Duro takes some days to dry, but dries, as its name implies, very hard. It can then be scraped down if necessary, and worked on again or touched on to any extent; and the peculiar quality of the relief given by brush work is, perhaps, best left untouched, or at least only added to, and not taken away from by scraping down, although a very fine finish could be obtained in this way, giving the work almost the look of ivory, though, I think, in that case, departing from its true character.

The frame margin given was worked in Gesso Duro, from a design of mine, by Harold Weeks.

The design for a bell-pull was modelled in gesso by Osmund Weeks, for reproduction in electro silver, the sea-horse being in copper.

I have also used for work of about this scale simply a mixture of plaster of paris or thin glue,

Of Raised  
Work in  
Gesso



Design for a  
Bell-pull,  
Modelled in  
Gesso

By Walter  
Crane

which answered fairly well if done with directness, as the mixture dries very quickly, and is apt to crack off the ground when dry.

The device for the Art Workers' Guild is an example of this method, also worked with a brush, and afterwards tinted with lacquers re-

duced to pale tints by methylated spirit. The lacquer, of course, hardens the surface.

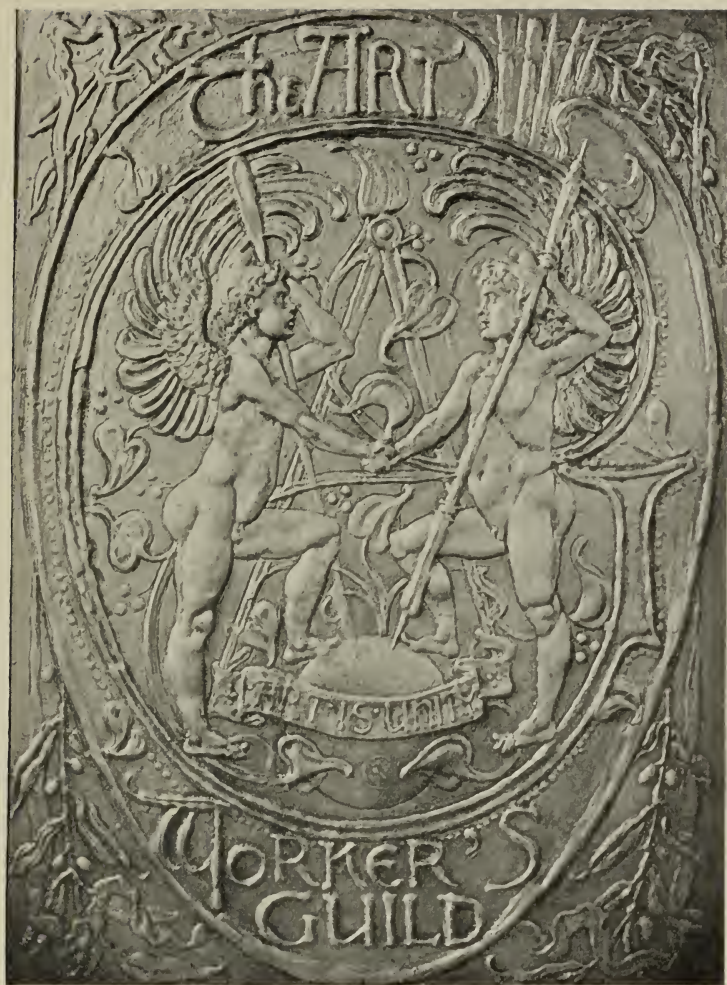
For bolder work and higher relief I have used plaster of paris with thin glue or gelatine. In this, in proceeding to model the design, you dip small pieces of cotton-wool pulled out finely, and having saturated them in the mixture, you build up your design on the panel, which may be of fibrous plaster, and suited for insertion in wall, frieze, or ceiling, or fireplace. It is important to wet the ground or shellac it to stop the suction, before laying on the gesso. It will dry slowly enough to be modelled with the fingers or tools, and added to when dry, or finished with brush work. It dries very fast, and the fibre of the cotton-wool makes it cling to the panel.

I have worked figures on a frieze with a brush on a fibrous plaster panel, and had them cast afterwards, since plaster and glue on large surfaces without fibre is apt to crack off. "The Dance" was a frieze panel worked in this way.

There are various patents and materials in the market for working in gesso. One of the best I have met with is called "Denoline." It consists of a fine powder, sold in tins, which only requires to be mixed with cold water to convert it into a paste of any consistency required. Flour appears to be an ingredient, and wheat flour, I believe, was used by the old Italian gesso workers.

The frame border was worked in this material, the gesso mixed as stiffly as possible, laid on and modelled with an ordinary modelling tool. It dries slowly and can be retouched. It





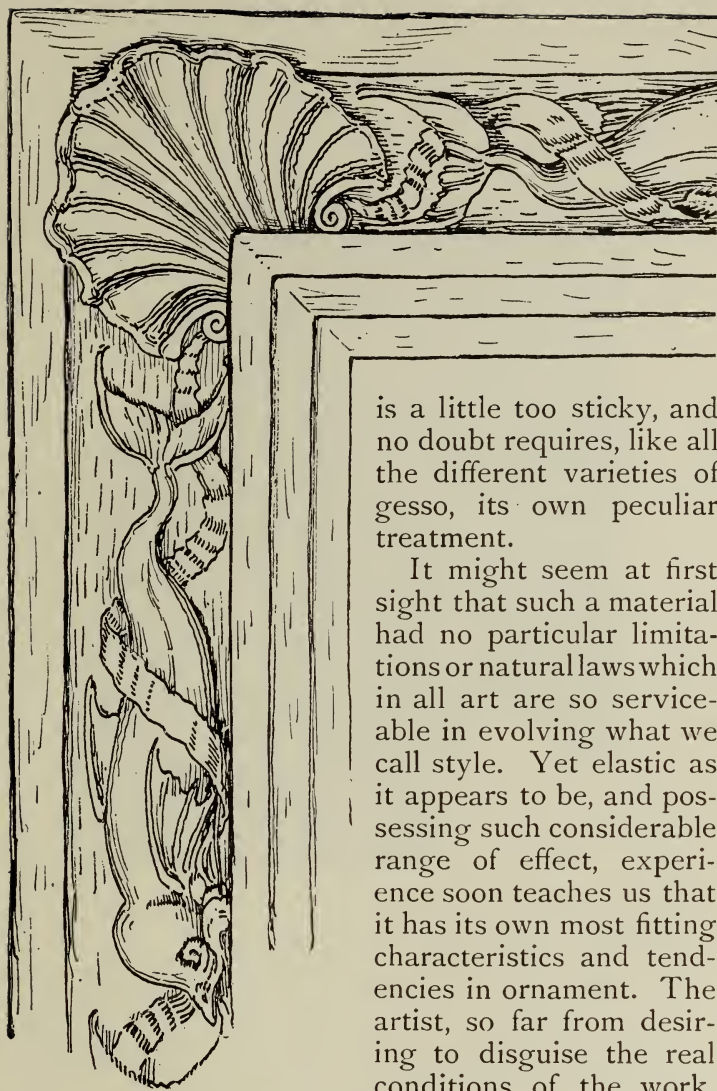
Gesso Panel

Designed by  
Walter Crane

The Dance:  
Frieze Panel  
in Gesso



Designed by  
Walter Crane



Picture-frame in Oak  
with Gesso  
("Denoline")  
Filling

Designed by  
Walter Crane

is a little too sticky, and no doubt requires, like all the different varieties of gesso, its own peculiar treatment.

It might seem at first sight that such a material had no particular limitations or natural laws which in all art are so serviceable in evolving what we call style. Yet elastic as it appears to be, and possessing such considerable range of effect, experience soon teaches us that it has its own most fitting characteristics and tendencies in ornament. The artist, so far from desiring to disguise the real conditions of the work,



Of Raised  
Work in  
Gesso

would rather emphasize their peculiar characteristics. For instance, in laying on and modelling any design in gesso with a brush, he will find the brush and the paste conspire together to favour the production of certain forms

Treatment of  
Form in  
Gesso  
Decoration



By Walter  
Crane

of ornament, delicate branch and leaf and scroll work, for instance, and dotted borderings.

Such forms as these the brush, charged with gesso, almost naturally takes, and the leaf shapes may be considered almost as the reflection of the form of the brush itself.

The modelling of the more raised smooth parts is produced by gradually and lightly adding—superimposing while moist fresh gesso, on the system of *pâte sur pâte*, which amalgamates with that underneath. The artist, in modelling the limbs of figures, would emphasize the main muscular masses, allowing for the natural tendency of the paste to soften its own edges in running together: so that a limb would be built up somewhat in the way indicated in the drawing by successive layers of the material floated over each other while moist. Of course, the

Of Raised  
Work in  
Gesso



System of  
Modelling  
with the  
Brush in  
Gesso

success of the result depends upon not only the nicety of touch but also on the proper consistency of the gesso, which, if mixed too thin, would be likely to lose form and run out of bounds. Gesso, therefore, for brush work should be mixed like the valetudinarian's gruel in one of Miss Austen's novels—"Thin, but not *too* thin."

It is of little use giving exact quantities, since satisfactory working depends upon all sorts of variable conditions, almost in the nature of accidents, such as temperature, quality of the materials, and nature of tools, none of which behaves exactly in the same way on all occasions,



Gesso  
Decoration:  
the Dining-  
Room,  
ia, Holland  
Park

Frieze and  
Panel over  
Fireplace  
and sub-  
sidiary work  
on the Wood-  
work of the  
Fireplace,  
Designed by  
Walter  
Crane.  
The Fire-  
place  
Designed by  
Philip Webb  
From a  
Photograph  
by W. E.  
Gray



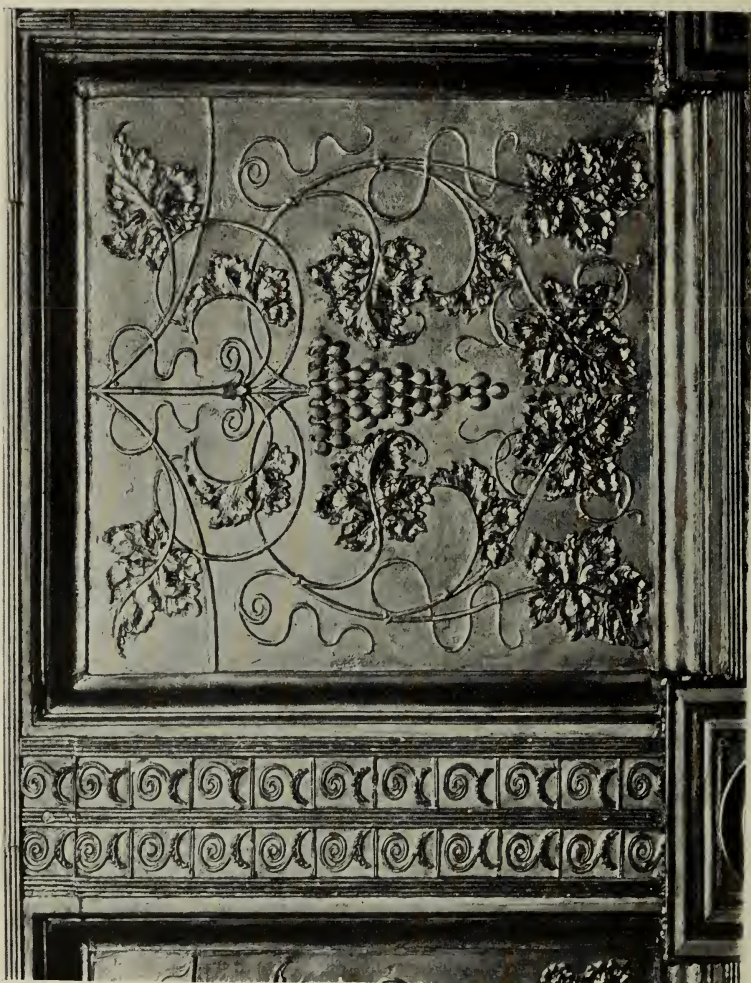


Gesso  
 Decoration:  
 the Dining-  
 Room,  
 ra, Holland  
 Park

Designed by  
 Walter  
 Crane.  
 The Side-  
 board  
 Designed by  
 Philip Webb.  
 From a  
 Photograph  
 by W. E.  
 Gray



Gesso  
Decoration:  
Detail of  
Coffered  
Ceiling,  
ra, Holland  
Park



Designed by  
Walter  
Crane.  
From a  
Photograph  
by W. E.  
Gray

and this variability must necessarily lead to different results in different hands.

It is only personal experience of the subtle mechanical and material conditions which are in-

Of Raised  
Work in  
Gesso



Gesso Panel  
Silvered and  
Tinted with  
Coloured  
Lacquers  
(part of  
Frieze in  
Dining-  
Room at  
1a, Holland  
Park)

Designed by  
Walter  
Crane.  
From a  
Photograph  
by W. E.  
Gray

separable parts of the production of all work of the nature of art, which can really determine their fitness to each individual worker, who must sooner or later, if his work is alive, make certain variations to suit his own particular idiosyncrasies.

Panel in  
Gesso,  
Tinted with  
Lacquers  
and Lustre  
Paint



Designed by  
Walter Crane



It is perfectly hopeless to attempt to pursue any form of art on purely mechanical precepts and principles. A few plain and practical directions, as to a traveller seeking his road in an unknown land, may be given, and the rest must be learnt step by step in experience, and as much as can be gathered from opportunities of seeing the work done by skilled hands, from which, indeed, everything learnable can be learnt.

Of Raised  
Work in  
Gesso



Panel in  
Gesso,  
Tinted with  
Lacquer

Designed by  
Walter Crane

Even complete mastery over materials is, after all, not everything. In fact, from the artistic (or inventive) point of view, work only begins there, as expression comes after or with speech.

Design has much analogy to poetry. Unless the motive is real and organic, unless the thought and form have something individual in them, unless the feeling is true, it fails to interest us. Herein lies the whole question of artistic production.

Yet is it worth while to learn what can be learnt about any form of art, if only it enables

Of Raised  
Work in  
Gesso

one to realize its true nature and something of the laws of its expression, which knowledge, at least, if it does not confer creative power, greatly increases the intelligent pleasure of its appreciation.

## THE RELATION OF THE EASEL PICTURE TO DECORATIVE ART

DESPITE the invention of oil painting (which Cennino considered only fit for lazy painters) and the fact that many easel pictures now produced appear to have a very remote relation to decorative art as generally understood, I am still of the opinion that the easel picture, properly considered and placed in its right relationship to its surroundings, by judicious treatment and hanging, and above all by a certain mural feeling, may be *the acme of decoration*. Its relation to a scheme of decoration may be like that of a jewel in a dress.

The Relation  
of the Easel  
Picture to  
Decorative  
Art

Of course, everything depends upon the point of view of the painter, in the first place, and in the present age the easel picture has been a favourite medium not only for the display, strange to say, of that individualism and experimentalism which are supposed to be special modern characteristics, but also for the merging of individuality in schools, types, and modes of painting, or frank imitation of fashionable masters.

The easel picture differs from any conscious

piece of decoration by not being necessarily associated with, or consciously related to, any other piece or scheme of design. Yet, practically, it *must* be related to something. It is related, in the first place, if a sincere work, to something in the painter's mind. Most painters are impressionable and sensitive to the effect of their surroundings. It is a common saying how much better a picture looks in the studio in the light in which it was painted, but probably it is not only the lighting but the surroundings also, and the picture has been perhaps unconsciously painted in harmony with its surroundings, its colour scheme affected by the colour of the studio walls, draperies, and furniture. Certain it is that, as a rule, painters are known by a favourite scheme and key of colour, quite apart from the fact that commercial considerations often encourage them to repeat themselves.

The modern picture-exhibitions—I mean big shows like that of the Royal Academy—have perhaps done more to destroy the decorative relationship of the easel pictures than anything. An analogous effect is produced on the mind by the sight of so many pictures of so many different sorts, subjects, and scales, and treatments crowded together, to that produced by a surfeit of ornament, and pattern on pattern, in internal decoration. This seems to point to the fact that true decoration lies rather in the sense of proportion and arrangement or distribution than in the use of particular units of ornament, styles, colours, or materials, and that one may destroy decorative effect by the very means of decora-

tion—but we have only to remember the meaning of the word.

The Relation  
of the Easel  
Picture to  
Decorative  
Art

I have spoken of *mural feeling* in a picture being important to its decorative quality or relationship, and it is the most obvious and necessary relationship, since it establishes a relationship with the destined place of the picture—the *wall*. Its frame, which separates a picture from its surroundings, also helps to unite it again to its original home, where it becomes a movable instead of a fixed panel enclosed by a moulding. No word is perhaps oftener on the pen of the prattler about pictures (or art critic) than the word “decorative,” which seems very variously understood and applied to all sorts and conditions of painting. What is really comprehended by the phrase is appropriate treatment, or *mural feeling*. A satisfactory definition of mural feeling would be difficult, since it is a quality composed of many elements, but I think most artists know what they mean by it. To my mind it includes a certain flatness of treatment with choice of simple planes, and pure and low-toned colours, together with a certain ornamental dignity or architectural feeling in the structure of forms and lines of composition, and is generally antithetic to accidental or superficial characteristics or what might be called landscape effects. Does this then exclude landscapes from the decorative relation, it might be asked?

Vast distances, large sky spaces, wind-tossed trees, turbulent seas and flying shadows certainly do not tend to the repose of a wall—but it is precisely to “give interest” (to people not



interested in "mere patterns") that pictures are hung upon it, and to some tastes there cannot be too much drama going on. Others would rather keep it bound up in another form in their libraries and only let it loose occasionally.

But I am far from saying that even the sky-landscape has no decorative place. But you must not mix it or have too much of it. A window may be an important decorative element in the scheme of an interior, and a landscape three parts sky may have something of the value of a window in a room. But it might be possible to decorate with landscapes alone, though one would prefer tapestry landscapes without sky, or with very high horizons, at least for the lower walls; certainly there never ought to be sky below the eye level on a wall. The Turner room has a certain unity and splendour of its own, regarded simply from a particular decorative point of view, and Turner would be pronounced I suppose the least decorative in feeling of modern artists—rather the epic poet in paint. Every age, too, has its own notions of decoration—indeed one might say even every decade now, or even a less period, we live so fast! No rules or canons of taste in art are of universal application or acceptable to all periods. As decoration is primarily fitness and harmony, with this central idea one may produce decorative effects with very different materials, and we have only to glance back to our historic periods to see how it was accomplished.

The standard of the Beautiful undoubtedly

shifts, or perhaps changes hands in the unceasing struggle to win it, and what is worshipped at one epoch or in one century is cast out and trodden under foot in the next. Perhaps we have (during the past century) gained a little historic balance or toleration, and all of us are not prepared to make a clean sweep of the work of the other centuries in favour of the favoured one.

But a harmonious effect is always more difficult with mixed materials (which may account in some degree for the marked success of "the tulip and the bird" in modern decorative patterns).

Certain material conditions, too, favour the growth of a higher type of art at one period than another. We can never elude the economic basis which necessarily affects our forms of art as of other things.

"Pictures, furniture, and effects" is the auctioneer's favourite phrase in describing the property of a gentleman. He might be describing pictures alone. We have heard of "furniture pictures"—but remove the reproach, is it not in the fitness of things that pictures should be furniture, and their highest destiny to decorate a room?

But when pictures become counters in the game of speculation, your decorative relations along with your social relations may take care of themselves. They become, in fact, very *poor relations*.

The portability of the easel picture may have something to do with its unrelatable character in

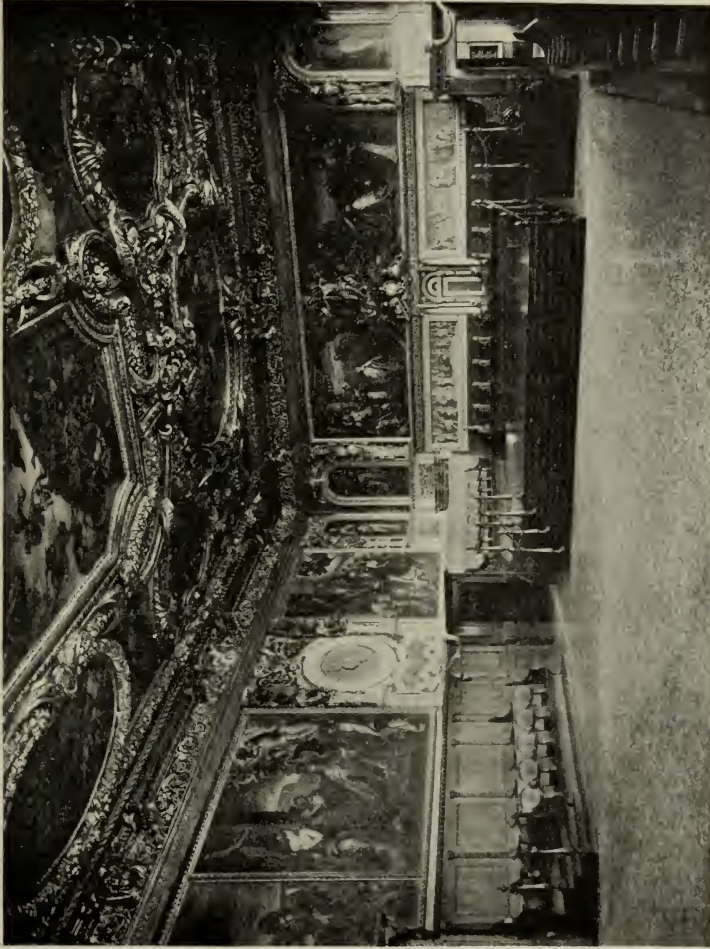
some cases. Destined for nowhere in particular as a rule, it goes on tour—a member of a performing and often very diverse company, to all the provincial towns, and even on the continent. Yet there were portable and even folding pictures in classical and mediaeval times, and certainly there was no want of decorative relationship in the latter period when, as we know, they were often most beautiful pieces of furniture and wall decorations, as well as pictures. Even the gold-framed oil picture was frankly treated by the Venetians as a decoration—and a ceiling decoration—as witness the Tintoretto in the Ducal palace.

It would not be difficult to select pictures from the National Gallery from the Italian, Flemish, and even the Dutch and Spanish schools, which would not only be admirable pieces of decoration but also furnish the decorator with beautiful decorative schemes of colour.

An easel picture might be made the central point of its own scheme of colour and tone, and led up to, as it were, by everything in the room.

There may be, as I have said already, room for the open sky in decoration, too, if you “sky” it enough, or put it in a frieze, and this touches a rather important point of decorative relationship, too often ignored by the hanger of easel pictures, that is the placing of the picture so that its horizon or vanishing point shall be on a level with the eye of the spectator.

Checked by such considerations, and due selection of scale and tone in placing pictures,



Pictorial  
Decoration,  
Ducal  
Palace,  
Venice

From a  
Photograph  
by Alinari

I would not say that decorative effects are not possible with the most easel of easel pictures—only you must add the decorator to the painter to bring them off.

Some facetious friends of William Morris once proposed to send him a circular asking subscriptions to an association for the protection of the poor easel-picture painter, since he was being frozen out by designers of wall-papers and hangings of such mere ornamental interest that people did not want anything else on their walls.

It was a joke, but there was meaning in it, and, thrown as we are on the world-market, the floating of one man or one kind of art is too often at the expense of the sinking of another. Pictures, like other things, should, in an ideal state, be produced for use and pleasure not for profit, and there would then be less doubt of their decorative relationship; and, although, if this method were adopted generally, it would greatly reduce the output, I cannot help feeling the Japanese show a true instinct for the decorative relation of pictures when they only show *one* kakimono at a time; but, after, all that would only mean that we could keep the rest of our collection—as so many masterpieces have been kept—rolled up or with their faces to the wall.



## A GREAT ARTIST IN A LITERARY SEARCHLIGHT <sup>1</sup>

OUR late veteran idealist-sculptor-painter so often sat in the chair of the literary operator, whether journalistic critic, interviewer, or more serious biographical appraiser, that one imagines that in his life-time he must long have ceased to wonder what manner of man—or artist—he might be, and, like enough, vexed not himself when vivisected to make a British holiday.

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Searchlight

The necessity for a more or less complete “sizing up” of a famous artist, of classifying him and affixing a descriptive label, or brand, seems to answer to some requirement of the age, despite the chance of the label becoming out of date, owing, perchance, to the unexpected versatility or longevity of the labelled.

It accords with the habits of a commercial people to have “all goods marked in plain figures;” curiosity, too, must be satisfied, and art, not always at once clearly speaking out for itself in the vernacular, the literary inter-

<sup>1</sup> “G. F. Watts,” by G. K. Chesterton. London, Duckworth and Co.

preter and critical labeller find their opportunity.

It is, however, difficult enough to attempt to sum up the quality and range of an artist in his lifetime, and in the short perspective of the present assign to him his proper relative position for all time; but, as it may be still more difficult after he has gone, there may be some excuse for the attempt—which has at least the excitement of daring—to make a true estimate of his powers and position while he yet liveth, and while his works change their character under different impulses and influences under our very eyes.

Not that such a brilliant and sympathetic little study as this by Mr. Chesterton needs any excuse. He is always such good reading, and has such a bright epigrammatic way of putting things, that even if he were less penetrating he could not fail to be amusing and stimulating. The rapid flash of his searchlight, as it were, touches so airily on so many interesting objects in its sweep that, as one might say of a painter, his background, with its wealth of subsidiary and illustrative detail, is often more fascinating than the treatment of his main subject or principal figure.

The book for one thing is remarkable for the attitude the author takes up in regard to the nineteenth century—in endeavouring to account for Mr. Watts—and, as it appears to be a not altogether uncommon view with men of the present generation—although mostly born in that mythical century—one may take his view

as more or less typical. But, really, from the way in which the century just closed is regarded

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“Love and  
Death”



By G. F.  
Watts, R.A.

one might suppose it was as distant almost as the thirteenth.

Have we then changed so much, or is it only

the figure-heads or brain-heads and their ideals which have changed? That "there is a tide in the affairs of men" we all know—a flood and an ebb tide, indeed, and it may be the tide of aspiration is now rather low, and some of us may sigh as we look seaward at the stately departing ships with their brave ensigns glowing in the fading light of sunset which has left the foreshore, encumbered with the drift and wreckage of disappointed hopes and disillusion.

We may have to wait some time for the flood and we know not what argosies of new hopes and thoughts it will bring us. In the meantime we must make shift with our *one* hope, or our hope with *one* string as best we may.

But if our young men have ceased to dream dreams, our old men have not ceased to see visions, and the great idealist-painter we have so lately lost must be counted as the foremost of such.

It will always be to his honour that through good report and evil report he steadfastly upheld the banner which proudly asserts the intellectual character of painting, and claims its right and its power, as a language of peculiar vividness, richness, and resource, to express certain typical and profound thoughts and emotions, and to embody by definite but delicate symbolism ideas and ideals not possible to be conveyed so succinctly, so suggestively, and above all, so beautifully by any other means.

Matter and manner cannot really be separated in any vital art. Form and spirit become

fused in all its highest, even in all its genuine shapes.

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Searchlight



“Sir Gala-  
had”

By G. F.  
Watts, R.A.

Mr. Chesterton rather steps aside in one place to poke fun at Allegory (as I note literary men are, curiously enough, prone to do), although



elsewhere he appears to admit that it has its due place and value in art, and he grows enthusiastic over Mr. Watts's use of it.

But that is just the crux. Everything is in the artist's use and treatment.

There is allegory and allegory. In its highest form it is a species of poetry, in its lowest it becomes a catalogue. We may go to Cesare Ripa and get a recipe for the correct make-up of any virtue we wish to symbolize. *Fedelta* (Fidelity), for instance, is given, "*Donna vestita di bianco, colla destra mane tiene una chiave, ed ha alli piedi un cane.*" Well, there you are—but it all depends upon the artist whether the emblem represents each item in the crudest form, or becomes a really fine design, full of refinement and inner meaning. To appreciate the allegory of a past age one must be able to read oneself into its spirit. The Allegories of Botticelli seem to belong to a different world from those of Rubens, and appeal to a different mood and even order of mind. I quite agree with Mr. Chesterton that a lady in classical drapery and a cornucopia, or caduceus, would quite inadequately represent modern commerce. (A bull and a bear playing see-saw across the globe would be nearer the mark, perhaps!) But the lady might have a place in a decorative composition, symbolizing things in the abstract, when beauty of treatment is again all-important. The spirit of Spenser's "*Faerie Queene*" is more painter-like in allegory (which is always in Spenser perfectly definite) than that of any other writer, and it

is perfectly blended with poetic and imaginative feeling, just as in a painted allegory the matter of it should be inseparable from its form.

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We feel this to be so in the finest works of



"Hope"

By G. F.  
Watts, R.A.

Watts, such as the "Love and Death." It is strange, however, to find Mr. Chesterton writing of allegorical pictures as if they were as plentiful as blackberries. "Millions," he mentions—I wonder how many he could count in any Royal Academy exhibition? I had supposed that alle-

gorical design was almost a lost art, as well as a dead language, in the estimation of our people—except perhaps the species which goes to the making of political cartoons.

Mr. Chesterton's discriminating appreciation of Mr. Watts's portraits is excellent, and his remarks upon the affinity between Watts and Tennyson very true. In the comprehensiveness, but indefiniteness, of their intellectual view they are akin; but vastness involves vagueness, and vagueness is a characteristic in the painter's work. In Mr. Watts's cosmic and elemental designs great half defined shapes loom up out of vaporous space. His heroes belong to no definite historic time, though in his wide catholicity and sympathy his work embraces all human types. His eye is fastened on the type and slights the circumstance. The accident, the realization of the moment is nothing to him; but one never saw a drawing in pure outline by the artist, and the charm of clear silhouette does not appear to appeal to him, neither is essential to his art. And Mr. Watts himself cannot be outlined, and therefore it seems curious to find him set down as a Puritan in one place, and a democrat (!) in another. Although Mr. Chesterton speaks of clear outline or "hard black line," as a quality not Celtic, and bases his argument that Mr. Watts is not Celtic upon the character of his line, his phrase, "sculptor of draughtsmanship," is incisive, as it is certainly a grasp of *structure* rather than outline which distinguishes Mr. Watts's work; and in this quality it may be

said lies the true reason of the difference between his portraits and much modern portraiture which seeks rather the expression of the moment and the accidental lighting, as in a landscape, rather than the type and the underlying structure, the expression of which establishes a certain relation, and that fundamental family likeness between very different individuals which Mr. Chesterton has noted. For, indeed, men and women are moulded in types far more than is commonly supposed.

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After all, the great merit of Mr. Chesterton's critical remarks consists in their not quarrelling with an oak tree because it does not happen to be a pine; and in that he does not think it necessary in order that his subject may be properly appreciated to make a pavement of all other reputations, or, like the irrelevant Walrus and Carpenter on the sand—with much virtue in that "if"—"if this,"—certain essential characteristics, say, of an artist's style—"were only cleared away it would be grand."

For the rest, Mr. Chesterton's sparkling style and wealth of whimsical illustration make the book uncommonly readable, which cannot always be said with regard to monographs on artists.





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